ANGKOR
EMPIRE

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GEORGE B WALKER

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ANGKOR EMPIRE

ANGKOR EMPIRE

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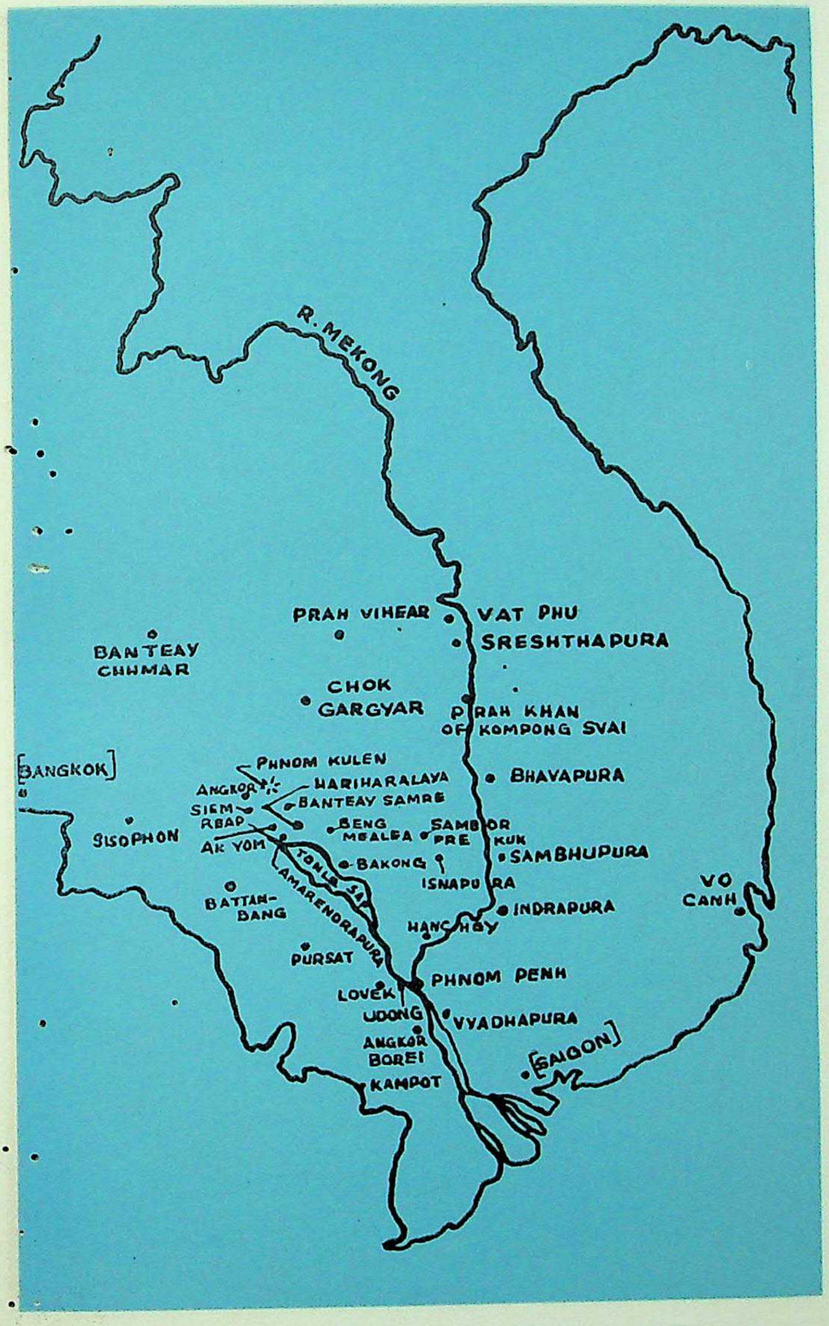
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SIEM RBAP
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BENG MEALEA
SAMBOR PRE KUK
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INDRAPURA
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HANG HAY
PURSAT
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[SAIGON]
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Map of Indo-China showing important Khmer locations.
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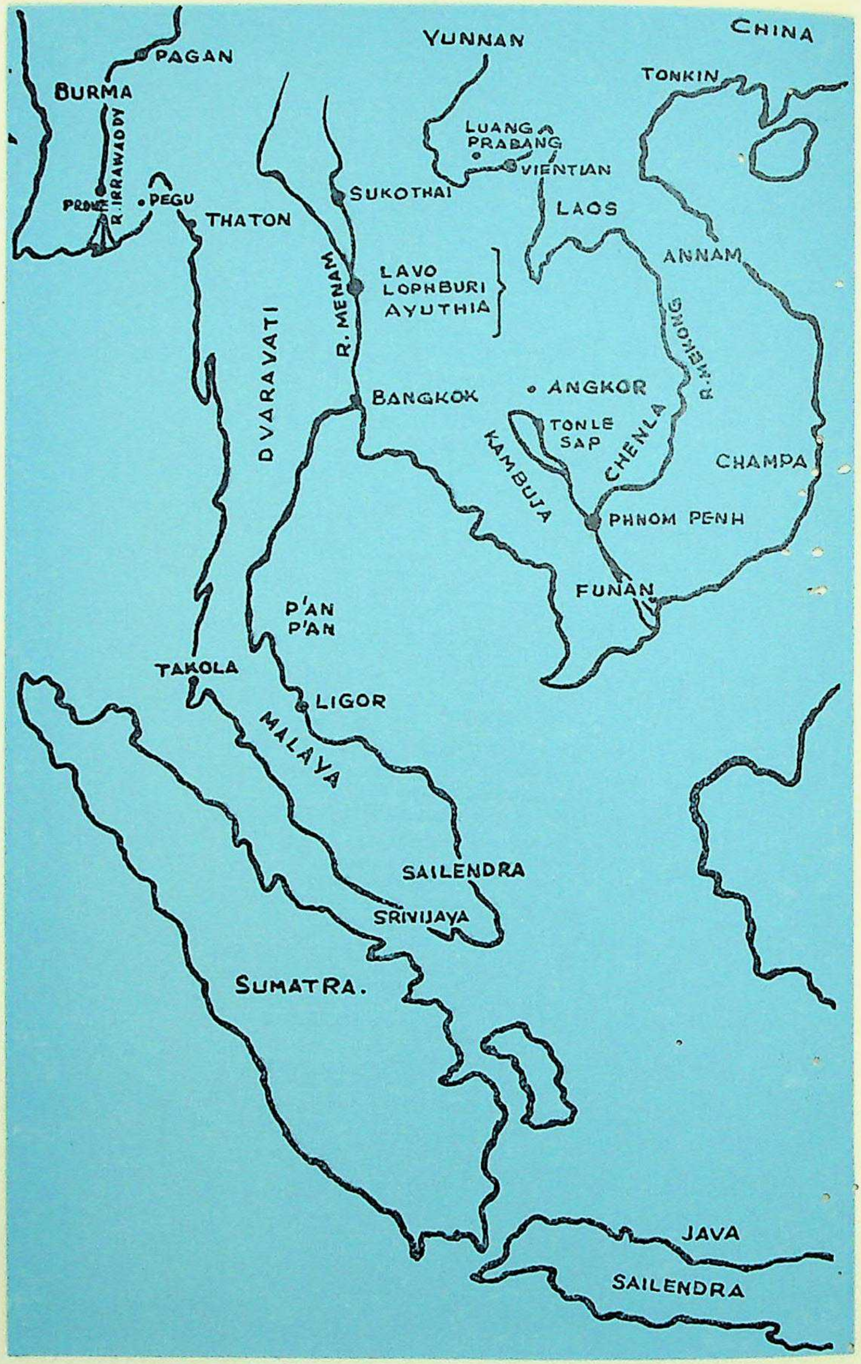
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PHNOM PENH
FUNAN
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SUMATRA.
JAVA
SAILENDRA

Map of Further India

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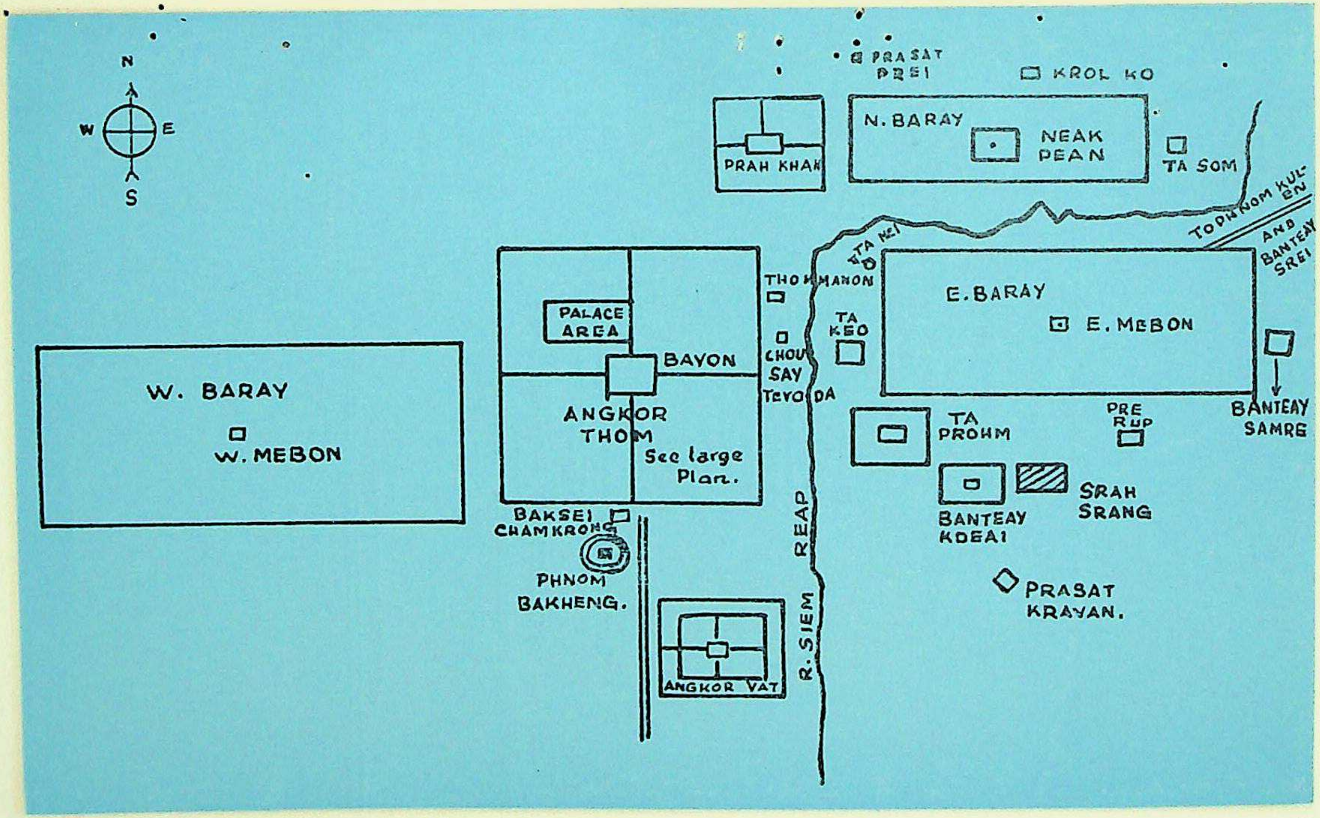
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BAYON
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TA PROHM
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BAKSEI CHAMKRONG
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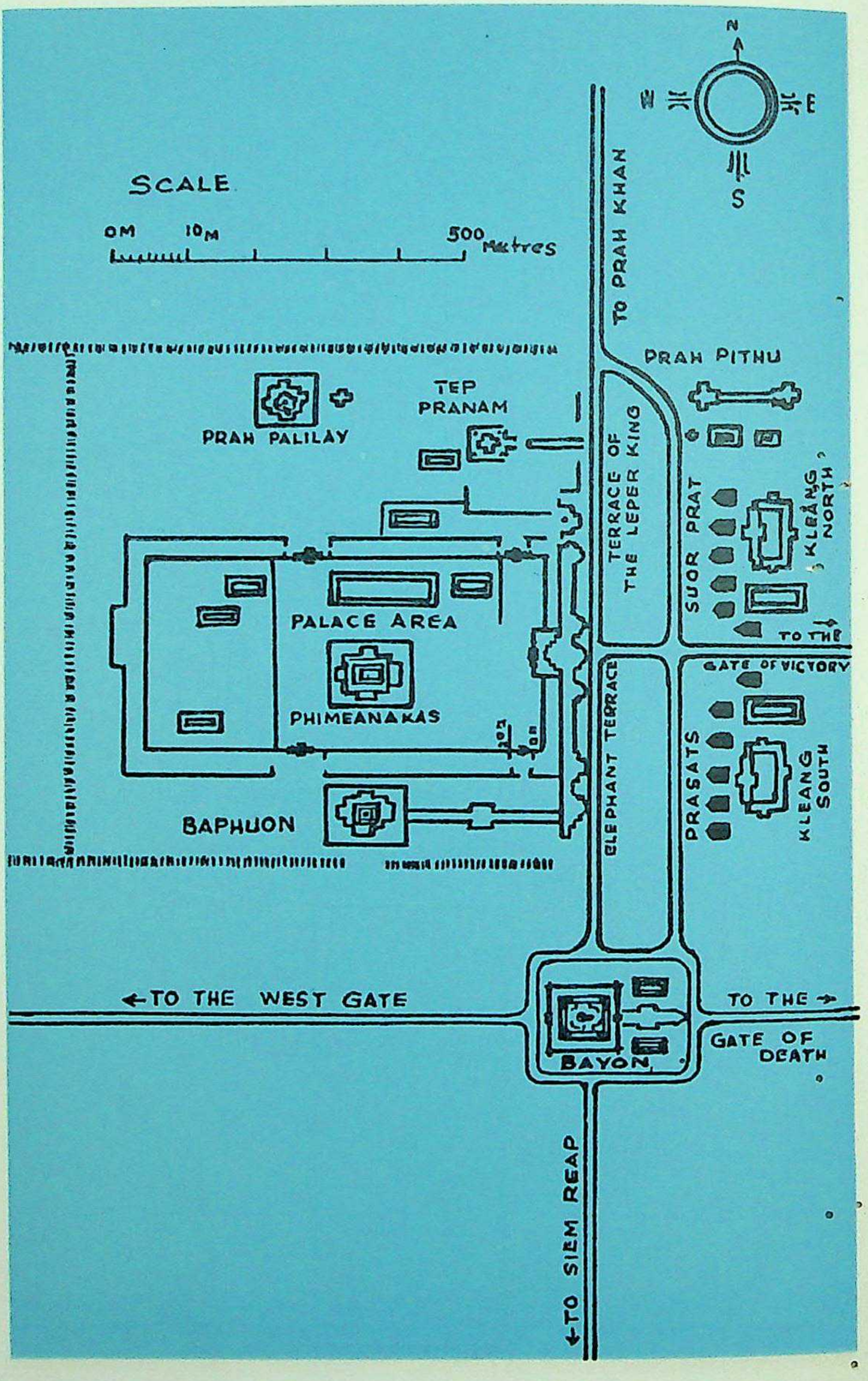
ANGKOR VAT
R. SIEM REAP

Plan showing Monuments around Angkor

No. 3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TO THE
GATE OF VICTORY
ELEPHANT TERRACE
PRASATS
KLEANG SOUTH
BAPHUON
← TO THE WEST GATE
TO THE →
GATE OF DEATH
BAYON
← TO SIEM REAP

Plan of Palace area of Angkor Thom

No. 4

ANGKOR EMPIRE

PREFACE

This book relates the story of the Khmers, who established a great empire at Angkor, in the Mekong Valley, between the 8th and 13th centuries. It does not claim to be a comprehensive survey of Khmer history, nor presume to recapture the glory of their civilisation. It is a brief outline of their rise, development and decline, and contains a descriptive account of some of the fabulous temples raised by them in the Cambodian jungles. Inevitably, as any such book is bound to be, it is also the record of yet another pilgrimage to Angkor.

For the writing of the historical portions my debt to Majumdar, Le May, Kalidas Nag, Quaritch Wales and, above all, Brodrick and Briggs, is everywhere apparent, and I record my grateful thanks to these authorities for the help I have derived from their books. And of course, no writer on the Khmers can omit an acknowledgment of gratitude to the magnificent work of the great French scholars of the *Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient,* to whom is due most of the credit for bringing to light the glorious heritage of the Khmers.

The Bibliography appended to the present work covers practically all the important books and articles written in English on Angkor and the Khmers. I believe this is the first bibliography of its kind, and I hope it will be useful to those who are not familiar with French. To those who know French a much larger field is open, as a book-list cataloguing only major works in French would include over a thousand titles. The reader may ignore the footnotes in this book. They are provided only as references in case any specific point is thought to be worth pursuing by reference to authoritative sources, I record hereby my grateful thanks to my brother Alexander Walker, for his advice in several matters, and for having so willingly undertaken the tedious task of seeing this book through the press. To Cedric Dover my thanks are due for pages of frank criticism that saved me from many errors both of fact and judgment. Material help was also given me by His Excellency Huy Mong, Governor of Siem Reap and Delegate of his Majesty the King of Cambodia, and I thank him for his assistance, and also for the opportunity of meeting the generous savants whose expert advice helped me over innumerable obstacles. I am thankful to my friend, Rene de Berval, on many counts, including permission to reproduce a chapter of this book that first appeared in his quarterly, *Asia*.

Among others who have helped me, mention must be made of Pierre Dannaud, Chief of the French Information Services of Indochina, Louis Damais and Jean Manikus of the *Ecole Françhaise d'Extrême Orient*, Dhap Chhoun, Commandant of the Franco-Khmer Corps at Angkor, Shri Tirupaddi Chettiar of Siem Reap and Shri M. A. Karuppiah of Saigon.

PROLOGUE

A century or so ago the London Geographical Society commissioned a French scientist, Henri Mouhot, to explore the area lying between the lower reaches of the Menam and Mekong rivers.

Mouhot visited Bangkok, capital of Siam, and Udong, at that time capital of Cambodia and in Siamese territory. He sailed across the Great Lake, Tonle Sap—" the little Mediterranean of Cambodia " he calls it—taking three days to make the crossing. In Battambang he was in the land of the tiger, the elephant and the rhinoceros. Alligators infested the rivers; pelicans and flamingos fluttered over the surrounding marshes. Nature supplied the natives with abundant food. Fish was plentiful, the Tonle Sap being the richest fish lake in the world. The trees provided mangoes and mulberries, bananas and bread-fruit, oranges and pomegranates in profusion, and also indigo, cotton, sandalwood and aloes. From this region came the gum resin, named *gamboge* after Cambodia, which was much sought after in the West both as a drug and a pigment.

Some of the trees bore no fruit or useful product, but grew to great heights, towering above the others like giants of the jungle. Heavy undergrowth made travel difficult, but Mouhot trudged on. He was told of many ancient temples in the region, built by the gods but long since deserted. He visited some of them and faithfully recorded his impressions.

He continued his journey north-east, and on the 22nd of January 1858 reached a village called Angkor, administered by a Siamese governor, for it was Siamese territory. The governor took a liking to the explorer. He particularly admired the Frenchman's beard, and running his fingers through the thick growth enquired how he could grow one like it. Mouhot does not give us his reply. The governor was helpful in providing transport for Mouhot's baggage for his trip to the ruins of another ancient temple, the greatest of them all, not far away.

Mouhot started at dawn on the 26th of January. An hour later, as the morning sun reddened the sky, he caught his first glimpse of the mighty towers of Angkor Vat, reaching out to the crimson clouds, upreared like mountain peaks amidst the trees of the Cambodian jungle.

" At the sight of this temple," he writes, " the mind feels crushed, the imagination staggered; one can but gaze admiringly and in respectful silence, for where, indeed, are words to be found to praise a marvel of architecture that has perhaps never been equalled in the whole world?"

He pushed on, and only a mile further north saw the ruins of Bayon, with its countless pinnacles, each formed of four human faces. There were dozens of other shrines and sanctuaries, deserted, ruined and desolate. " We moved," he writes, " from marvel to marvel in a state of ever-growing ecstasy. Picture to yourself the finest productions, perhaps, of the architecture of all ages, dumped down in the depths of these forests, in one of the remotest countries of the world, a wild deserted tract where the marks of savage beasts have blotted out those of man."

The report of his discovery was not immediately believed.[1] Similar tales had been told by hunters as early as 1570, and reported thirty years later by a Portuguese Dominican. A French missionary gave a description of the ruined city of ' Onco '. A Catholic priest of Battambang, Father Sylvestre, helped Mouhot in his journey to Angkor, but seems not to have thought it worth reporting in any great detail.

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[1] xlv p. 604. (For significance of Roman numerals see Bibliography).

Slowly the trail marked by the French pioneer was followed by other explorers, German, English and French, who corroborated and expanded his tale. In 1898 the French learned society, the *Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,* was formed to explore the ruins and rescue from oblivion the achievements of the people who raised the monuments.

The area lay within Siamese territory. To obtain possession of it France inserted in the Franco-Siamese Convention of 1907 a clause for the retrocession to Cambodia of the provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap and Sisophon, which contained the main temples. Two years later King Sisowath with great ceremony took formal possession of the ancient capital of his ancestors, today perhaps the chief wonder of the world.

Henri Mouhot died on November 10th 1861. While exploring the country of Laos he was struck down by a painful tropical illness near Luang Prabang. A month before the end he gave up writing his journal. His final note, dated October 13th, written in a shaky hand, reads, " Have pity on me, O my God!" When he died his faithful Chinese servant and companion Phrai buried him, returning to Bangkok with his personal possessions and his papers, and gave a report of the manner of his death.

In 1867 the French authorities erected a stone monument over the lone grave of Henri Mouhot, the man to whom we owe the discovery of one of the greatest forgotten empires of history.

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RISE

The Aborigines

The builders of Angkor were a people known as the Khmers, the story of whose development and decline forms one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of Asia.

It is not yet known exactly who they were and where they came from. They suddenly and mysteriously rose from obscurity, flourished for a few centuries, and then faded to oblivion. It seems they were a mixed people; a western graft on an aboriginal stem, but the problem of who the aboriginals were and who the westerners still awaits solution.

Indochina lies between Java and Pekin, the areas where the skulls of PITHECANTHROPUS and SINANTHROPUS were discovered. Anthropologists regard this region as the cradle of certain forms of Archaic and Fossil Man, and one of the most important diffusion areas of mankind.[1]

The ancestors of the Negritos, Australoids and Melanesians may have evolved in Indochina. From here they migrated in the course of centuries to South India and the Andamans, Ceylon and the Celebes, Papua and Australia, leaving behind samples of their Old Stone Age artifacts and bone tools. Perhaps relics of this race are still to be found in the primitive tribes who inhabit certain remote mountain regions of Indochina.[2]

About the second millennium B.C. there was another large-scale Movement of Peoples, from Yunnan in south-west China, and from Tibet. They were the Proto-Malayans, who used the old migratory highways, some settling in Indochina, others overflowing into the islands of the Indonesian archipelago. They represented a Neolithic culture, characterised by the use of metals, and the construction of megalithic monuments, such as are found in Upper Laos, Malaya and Sumatra. Their skill in navigation brought them into contact with many outlying areas in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean.[1]

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[1] xxiv p. 90. [2] xxiv p. 133.

The Mongolian ancestors of the Khmers followed in the wake of one of these great migrations of peoples, and entered the area of the Great Lake and the Lower Mekong via the Mun valley about the fifth century B.C., while their cognates, the Mons, settled around the Lower Menam. They traced their descent through women, practiced a cult in which ancestor worship played an important part, and performed their religious ceremonies in sacred places erected on the heights.[2]

In the regions where they settled there had assembled an immense substratum of ethnic groups of great variety. With these the Khmers mingled freely, though the exact relationship between them is not clear and still remains to be sorted out. But it appears from present evidence based on linguistic traits, tribal traditions, physical characteristics and religious beliefs, that a very close relationship existed, and, for all we know, it was mainly these large aboriginal groups, Khmerised and assimilated, who formed the basis of the population of the classical Khmer period. When Indian civilisation reached them they were described as black and barbarous.

Chou Ta-kuan, a Chinese traveller of the 13th century to whom we owe much of our knowledge of the Khmers at the zenith of their power, describes one class of indigenous people, "savages from mountain solitudes"[3], whom he observed during his stay at Angkor. They were probably the Moi, the largest of the aboriginal groups. Some of them were untameable, and lived in inaccessible regions, were skilled in the art of preparing deadly poisons, and were constantly fighting among themselves. Another, milder tribe were not so difficult to domesticate, and were brought to the towns and sold as slaves for so small a price that only the very poor could not afford to have them. By the upper classes they were looked upon as animals, and formed a race of beings apart. They lived under the pile houses of their masters and were regarded as their property, to do with as they willed. Among themselves the slaves freely and frequently indulged in sexual intercourse, but the master of the house would as soon think of copulating with an animal as taking a slave woman to himself. Chou Ta-kuan, who was a lonely Chinese, adds, that if anyone, such as a lonely Chinese, who is a guest in the house, sleeps with a slave woman, the master, if he learns of it refuses to sit with him any more since he has been familiar with a species of the brute creation.[1]

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[1] xxiv p. 40. [2] xxiv p. 133. [3] xxii p. 247.

This self-righteous prudery did not reflect the sentiments of the common folk, for miscegenation was already far gone when the Khmer Empire was at its peak, and the Moi, or related aboriginal elements, formed a not insignificant section of the population, a view amply confirmed by the evidence of the Angkorean bas-reliefs.

Today the Moi are still regarded as degenerate, and as late as the 19th century they were believed to be the only human beings with tails. This calumny has been disproved, but the legend of their barbarism persists. The fact is, many Moi tribes are handsome and are amenable to civilisation. The motifs on their ceremonial bronze drums and the workmanship of their gongs and jars show great artistic ability.[2] They possess an astonishing racial memory, embodied in their sagas, a study of which might throw light on the existence of the human race in the prehistoric period. These sagas, which are now in danger of perishing, have a description of the mammoth and the megatherium, and are a treasure-house of information concerning the remote past.[1] Some Cambodian sin-expiation ceremonies go back to practices of the Palaeolithic period.[2] From earliest times until the beginning of the last century the rulers of Champa, Laos and Cambodia, used to send annual presents to the aboriginal priest-ruler of the Jarai (Moi) tribes; apparently a relic of their allegiance to a prehistoric suzerainty.[3]

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[1] xxii p. 247. [2] lxxiii p. 288.

Both the early Khmers and the indigenous tribes shared in a common system of Proto-Malayan religious cults, which extended at that time from South China to the Islands of the Pacific. This religious system is a pattern of primitive beliefs, having its basis in the early fears, desires and passions of men the world over. It relates to that part of our common past, wherever found, that "civilisation" has subjugated for the general good. It is the foundation of all archaic societies, and belongs to the realm of our earliest instincts and intuitions. The art associated with it is expressed in abstract forms of magical designs and geometrical signs, in grotesque distortions and oblique symbolical transcripts of a realm of fear and fantasy. It gives reality to a nightmare life and finds beauty in immemorial prototypes that have no connection with organic and earthly things unless they are associated by some esoteric signature to the scheme of our forgotten and ancestral lives. Symbolism does not begin to be understood unless it is traced to these primordial usages when religion was ritual, and art, and superstition.

The Khmers acquired, as part of the heritage of their liaison with the aborigines, the artistic and spiritual background of this culture. It seems that they were pitched to a high potential and only required the incentive of a fresh racial infusion or the inspiration of an effusive and dynamic culture to blossom forth with art creations of the highest order.

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[1] lxxiii p. 95. [2] xxiv p. 34. [3] lxxiii p. 118.

Coming into contact with this *mélange* of peoples we find new arrivals from the west, "strangers recently arrived in the country," according to the Moi sagas,[1] bringing with them beliefs and practices, both Dravidian and Aryan, that were to fuse with the ancient faiths and form the basis of a new and brilliant civilisation.

Funan

Culturally the river Mekong marks the border where Chinese influence gives way to the Indian. This great waterway is 2800 miles long, 1200 of which are in China where it is a turbulent and impassable river called the Dzachu. In Indochina it forms the great artery of Cambodia, its name being a corruption of Ma-Ganga, Mother Ganges. Annam falls within the Chinese cultural complex; west of the Mekong we are in the region of Indian influence. German scholars speak of this area as *Hinterindien,* for in many significant respects it is an extension of the Indian cultural commonwealth.

There appears to have been contact between India and these regions both by sea and by land from earliest times. The ancient Indian texts, in Sanskrit and Pali, refer to Java (Yavabhumi), Sumatra (Suvarnadvipa), Burma (Mrammas) and Malaya (Malayu), but the earliest Hindu and Buddhist sites in these areas are isolated and scattered, and their history uncertain.

Substantial evidence of Hindu colonies on a large scale is not available until the first century A.D. in Funan

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[1] lxxiii p. 95.

(Cambodia), the second century in Champa (Annam), the fifth in Taruma (West Java) and Prome (Burma), the sixth century in Dvaravati (Siam), the seventh in Srivijaya (Sumatra), and the eighth in Sailendra (Malaya and Mid-Java).

Adventurous mariners from Kalinga and the Coromandel coast, in the Pallava country near the mouth of the Godaveri river, sailing due east arrived at the nearest landfall in Malaya, probably Takuapa, the Takola of Ptolemy's second century map.[1] From Takuapa a well-favoured route for travellers was up the Tenasserim river and across the Gulf of Siam and the South China Sea to Siam, Funan, Champa, Java and Sumatra. Overland from Bengal and Assam penetration would have been effected as far as Cambodia and Annam. They were well-known routes and were used in the second century A.D. by a Roman embassy on its way to China, and also by a band of Roman and Greek acrobats and musicians which the chroniclers of the Han dynasty say was sent from Burma to China by sea.[2]

Chinese historical sources give evidence of the existence, in Cambodia, of the first Indianised kingdom in the region of *Hinterindien*—the kingdom known to us only by its Chinese name of Funan. It rose from a confederation of unknown tribes who had settled around the valley of the lower Mekong, and was the predecessor of the Khmer empire.

The rulers of the eastern principalities of India appear to have kept hardly any records of their overseas exploits, and, needless to say, nothing remains of the written documents and records that were supposed to have formed the libraries of Funan. It is to Chinese travellers and Chinese dynastic chronicles that we owe our present knowledge of the early Funanese period. Much of it has been retrieved from obscurity as a result of the labours of the French scholar, Paul

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[1] xxii p. 16. [2] xxii p. 24.

Pelliot, who assembled this data from original sources and published his translations of them in 1903.

According to a Chinese chronicler of the third century A.D. the kingdom was first governed by a woman named Liu-ye, or Willow Leaf, probably Sinicised from " Cocoanut-Leaf ". She belonged to the royal serpent race of Nagas, and was " celebrated for her virile force and her exploits ".[1] A Brahmin adventurer of the Lunar race, whom the Chinese historian calls Huen-tien, and whose Indian name is Kaundinya, landed on the shores of Funan. It was one of the earliest of Indian colonial enterprises. The queen went out in a boat to attack him, whereupon Kaundinya raised his magic bow, given him by Indra, and shot an arrow which pierced the queen's craft. Liu-ye submitted to the Brahmin who named her Soma, and they ruled Funan as king and queen. This was about the end of the second century A.D.

There are variations of this story, and some confusion concerning the relationship of Kaundinya with Kambu, the eponymous founder of the Cambodian race.

The fear of " going native " is a phobia shared by most colonials. It is not a European weakness alone. Chinese, Indians, Japanese and other orientals, no less than the modern " imperialists " of the West, have tried to keep themselves defensively aloof from the natives in their domains. The caste system in India is a relic of the refusal of the Aryans to " go native ". Kaundinya married the queen, but he remained in all respects both coloniser and missionary. He Hinduised the inhabitants and, seeing they went about naked, taught them to wear clothes, like any Christian evangelist in the South Seas.

He first dressed his queen in a square piece of cloth with a hole in it through which she could pass her head, and bundled her hair up into a tidy knot, and thus established the earliest styles of clothing and coiffure for the women of Funan.[1] In general the styles persisted through the succeeding centuries, although shortly after Kaundinya's reform the original opening in the cloth was enlarged sufficiently for the garment to slip down to the waist, leaving the bosom bare. The men continued to move about nude and refused to adapt themselves to any constricting habiliments. They, or a related tribe, were even reported to have laughed out loud at the attire of a distinguished foreign envoy who came to visit their king, because it appeared so ridiculous to them to see a man clothed. About a century later, however, a Chinese ambassador at the court of Funan impressed on the king the need to dress his subjects. His advocacy must have been convincing for the king issued a decree forbidding males to go about uncovered.

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[1] xxii p. 17.

According to the Chinese accounts Funan was a prosperous state abounding in many precious minerals, including gold and silver, and also a kind of black diamond found in soft masses at the bottom of the sea. This substance, reports the chronicler, hardens in a single day and is impossible to break except with rhinoceros horn, an object believed to possess magical powers.

The people of Funan, says another old chronicle, are cunning, do not like to fight, live in pile houses of woven bamboo, are ugly to look at, black-complexioned, crinkly-haired, go about with bare feet, and their tattooed bodies " know neither upper nor lower dress."[2]

" The boys and girls," adds a document of the Liang dynasty, " satisfy their urges without restraint," an observation confirmed by Chou Ta-kuan seven centuries later.[3]

Flesh and fish of several varieties were freely eaten, including turtles and iguanas, while the belly of the crocodile was specially favoured as a great delicacy.

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[1] xxii p. 17. [2] xxii p. 16, p. 29. [3] xxii p. 29.

Among the amusements were cock-fights and hog-fights, the latter regarded as one of their principal diversions.

There were no prisons and no courts. After a three-day period of fasting the accused was made to take out, with his bare hands, a few eggs that had been thrown into a cauldron of boiling water; if he was scalded he was regarded as guilty and thrown into the moat around the royal palace where the crocodiles feasted on him.

The dead were disposed of by throwing the body into the river, by interring in a grave, by abandoning in a field for birds to devour, or by burning on a pyre.[1]

The story of Funan, as we have it, enshrines a number of interesting features. The name Funan is a Chinese transcription of the Khmer word *vnam,* which is the archaic form of the Modern Cambodian word *phnom,* meaning " hill ". The sanctifying of mounds on the phallic analogy is an ancient human custom, with which the erection of minarets, spires and temple-towers has more than a superficial connection.

The tree and the serpent both appear to have been indigenous in Indochina, and the legend of Queen Willow-Leaf is rich in symbolism, for she has a tree-totem name, and is queen of a serpent race. The tree and serpent motifs are common to many indigenous cultures and it is clear that they were employed in this region before Kaundinya's arrival. In ancient legend the Khmers called their country Kok Thlok, " the land of the *thlok* " or tree.[2] The sex and sovereignty of the ruler suggest a matriarchal society which was at first ruthlessly crushed by the strong paternalism of Brahmanical belief. The story of Kaundinya's arrow splitting the queen's craft is a thinly disguised drama of seduction.

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[1] xxii p. 29. [2] xxii p. 11.

Queen Willow-Leaf and her religion were aboriginal. The Hindu culture that followed in the wake of Kaundinya's missionary exertions merely laid a veneer of ritual and formalism over the main body of existing beliefs.

The priestly and ceremonial language of Funan was Sanskrit, in which a few mutilated inscriptions belonging to the early period have been found. The speech of the people was a form of Khmer, related to the conjectural Austro-Asiatic group of tongues.[1] According to George Coedès, Khmer differs less from Modern Cambodian than the language of the *Chanson de Roland* from Modern French.

There was a similar dichotomy in religion. Among the common people animism and ancestor-worship prevailed, but in the court Indianised modes of worship were followed. Vishnu was the most popular of the priestly deities in the Funanese period, and many statues of him exist. Shiva was relatively unimportant, and when shown was usually represented by the *linga,* the stylised form of the male organ of generation, typifying the creative energy of the cosmos. At a later period, in one of the strangest syncretisms of history, Vishnu and Shiva received homage together as a unified deity, known, by a combination of titles, as Harihara.

Though the earliest statues found in Funan are those of Buddha,[2] Buddhism did not find it easy to flourish. There were short periods of Buddhist influence in the fifth century, when two monks from Funan went to China to translate Buddhist texts; one of them, Mandrasena, was unable, it is said, to master the Chinese language.[3] The Buddhist influence was shortlived and when the Chinese traveller Yi-tsing (fl.690) visited the country he bemoaned the fact that there were no more monks left, since a wicked ruler of Funan had suppressed the Buddhists.

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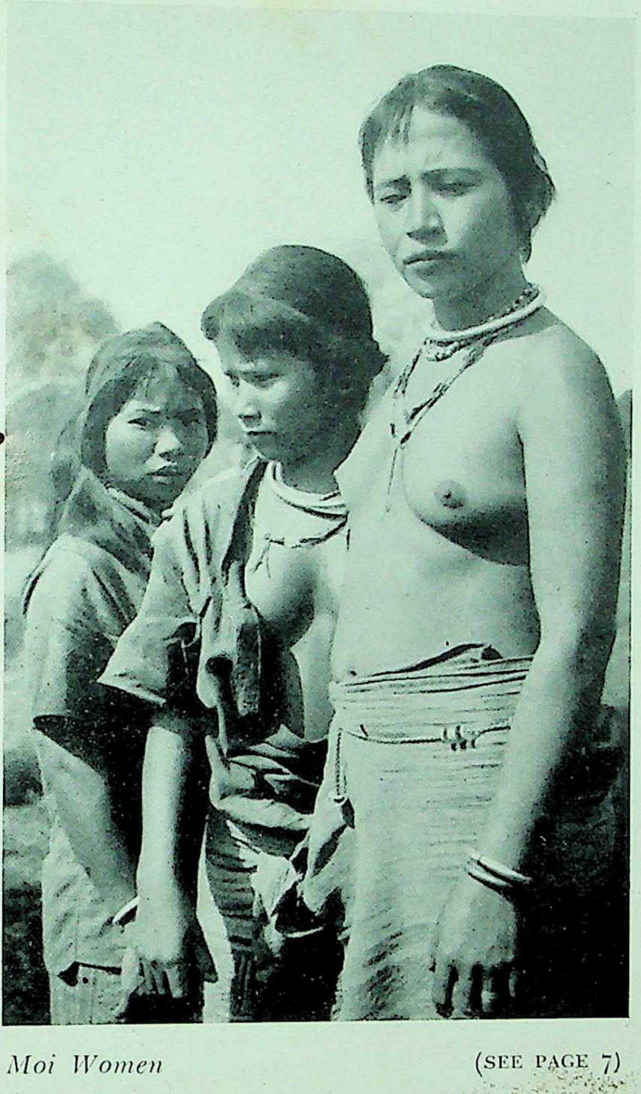
[1] xxii p. 15. [2] xxii p. 35. [3] xxii p. 29.



Moi Women (SEE PAGE 7)

The names of the early kings are found only in the Chinese chronicles and have been invariably, and at times unrecognisably, Sinicised. When they are distinguishable by their regular Sanskrit names they are found always to carry the suffix *varman*, as in Indravarman, Suryavarman, etc. The term means " buckler " or " shield ", and suggests " one protected ", so that Indravarman is *Protected of Indra.*[1] (cf. " The Lord is my shield ", *Psalms* 28,7). The use of this suffix, derived from the Pallava court, was continued throughout the Khmer imperial period. Another characteristic, observed from Khmer inscriptions after the first decade of the 9th century, is that in references to deceased kings a posthumous name is used, entirely different from the king's name when he lived, a peculiarity found both in Egypt and China.

A number of Indian classical terms and religious phrases, and the names of the deities and demons of Hindu and Buddhist mythology also become current, though most of them suffer a change, becoming Khmerised, guttural and abrupt *en route* : " Garuda " becomes " Krut;" " *mukuta*," " *mkot*;" " *guru*," " *kru*;" " *Ramayana*," " *Reamker*;" the river, re-named after " Ma-Ganga," Mother Ganges, becomes " Mekong;" the Sanskrit " *nagar* " (city), becomes " *nokor*." It is from the latter that the name " Angkor " is derived. Like the Arabic " Medina," the Old Mesopotamian " Ur," the Indian " Puri," " Angkor " just means " The City."

Many place-names became Indianised, especially the various capitals and the chief towns and ports. The capital of Funan in the 5th century was Vyadhapura (now Angkor Borei), about four miles south of Phnom Penh. Its chief port was Kampot from where the Funanese made successful incursions into Malaya, and sent out trading vessels to Sumatra and Java. An embassy was despatched to India and returned with a gift of four Scythian horses. Embassies were also sent to China, once with a present of a coral Buddha, to felicitate the founder of the Liang dynasty, once with a gift of a hair of Buddha twelve feet long.[1]

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[1] xxiv p. 45.

The latter, the last embassy that independent Funan sent to China, also carried a live specimen of the much-valued rhinoceros. The ancient books recommended the use of crushed rhinoceros bone as a prophylactic against evils of every kind, and prescribed a mixture made of powdered rhinoceros horn as an aphrodisiac and an elixir of everlasting youth—the dream and the death of so many Chinese emperors.

Hinduism brought to this region an unusually rich mythology which provided ready-made material for the Khmers and their predecessors. It brought the Brahmins, but only an attenuated form of caste: Brahmins overseas have never been over-scrupulous in matters of caste; the classes that developed in later times were feudal. Hinduism also provided the main features of court and temple ritual, though the masses remained animists of the older persuasion. But no cult of terror was imported, or was able to take root in Cambodian soil. Most of the tribes were matriarchal but there was no worship of the Mother Goddess, either in her aspect as Kali, with her necklace of skulls, or as Shakti, the energising principle of the universe; and that phase of Tantrik worship employed in Cambodia never evolved at any time into a cult of esoteric sexuality. But Hinduism did provide the impetus for many original creative works, all consecrated to the Indian gods and based in part on the Indian tradition.

Early Khmer art shows evidence of Indian influence. An old temple of large rectangular red bricks with bas-reliefs on its walls suggest affiliations with the Amaravati school of South India.[1] Certain authorities find indications of Gupta influence in early Khmer statuary, especially in the figures of Vishnu and Buddha, but it has been urged that the statues are too lissom, sinuous and graceful to be related to the austere classical art of the Guptas.[2] In some cases, at any rate, Pallava rather than Gupta influences predominate, though these were in all likelihood received by way of the Mon state of Dvaravati in the Menam, and not direct from India.[3]

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[1] xxiv p. 44.

What the Khmers did with all this material was to transform it so completely that it can hardly be said to be Indian any more. It belongs to a category of its own, with strongly marked features clearly distinguishable as "Khmer." "The creations of Khmer art," says Brodrick, "are creations, not just copies."[4]

It has hitherto been too facilely assumed that the civilisation of the regions known as Greater India is solely the product of Hindu cultural contact, and that before the arrival of the Hindu colonists the inhabitants lived in a state of benightedness, contributing little or nothing to their own advancement. This theory needs to be re-examined and it is good to know that scholars are now devoting themselves to the task.[5]

Before the coming of the Hindus the inhabitants of these eastern regions, were not savages. Far from it. They possessed an ordered political life, exceptional navigational ability, an advanced system of agriculture and irrigation, and a sound metallurgical technique; they had their own artistic and dramatic traditions which have remained practically unaltered to the present day. The Javanese, to take but one instance, developed the *wayang* or shadow-play, invented the

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[1] lxxi p. 59. [2] lxxii p. 8. [3] lxxii p. 10. [4] xxiv p. 255. [5] lxx (a) p. 17.

gamelan or xylophone, and other orchestral instruments, practiced the *batik* craft, used a system of coinage and possessed their own metric system, all before the coming of the Hindus, though hitherto these have generally been regarded as products of Hindu contact.

The Chinese chronicle *San-kuo-shih* of the middle of the 3rd century A.D. observes, "The people of Funan love to carve ornaments and to chisel."[1] Their later masterpieces amply justify this predeliction. Khmer carving equals the best work of India, and in sensitivity and refinement is unmatched anywhere. The subjects are chaste, and the sculptures and carvings lack, to quote the unkind phraseology of Sitwell, "that repulsive, greasy quality that so often mars Hindu works of art."[2] There is no exposure of the pudenda, no exhibition of the genitals, and never any suggestion of a *maithuna* embrace such as we find in certain Central Indian temples or the Orissan friezes.

Cambodian dancing, like Siamese, from which it is largely derived, is a local product. The differences that exist between the Indian and Cambodian styles are marked and clear. There is less frenzied agitation[3] and more elegance in the dances of Siam and Cambodia. Cambodian music also is not at all like Indian: it is pentatonic, and related to the music of the Far East. In the Bayon bas-reliefs are to be seen musical instruments, costumes, head-dress and art-forms still found among many tribal groups in Indochina, but unknown in India.[4]

Khmer architecture, apart from its stupendous proportions which were only rarely achieved in India, is remarkable for many characteristics which belong uniquely to the Khmer building style. In fact, advocates are not wanting who contend that Khmer architecture was the precursor and not the successor of the Indian building art.[1] Khmer architectural forms were derived mainly from indigenous wooden models.[2] Their huts were built on stilts on a base of layers of logs laid horizontally in order to raise them above the swamps, and from this came the parallel courses of torus mouldings which formed the high plinths of their later stone structures; the terracotta tiling and log planking on the roofs of the primitive houses were duplicated in stone; the stairways were copied from the steps by means of which the villagers mounted to their elevated huts. The design and originality of the *prasats* or towers are striking, and so different are they from the *sikharas* of India as to bear hardly any resemblance to them.[3] Significantly, in South India the main *gopura* or gate-tower is usually raised over the entrance and seldom over a sanctuary, whereas in Angkor it is always erected over the holy of holies. The abundant carvings that decorate the Khmer buildings still fall far short of the excessive ornamentation of the Indian temples.

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[1] xxii p. 34. [2] xcix p. 72. [3] lxxxiv p. 223. [4] xxiv p. 255.

The inscriptions even of the early Khmer period are regarded by competent epigraphists as " models of regularity, finish and elegance, such as have never been found at any time in India ", and almost from the beginning they were partly in Khmer.[4]

Hinduism left on Khmer culture a feebler impress than the ancient Aryan religion on Dravidian worship. Hinduism, in spite of the predominant place assigned to the *Vedas*, is only superficially Rig-Vedic. Many gods of the *Rig-Veda* are forgotten; many others have ceased to receive homage. Worship is still largely confined to ancestral aboriginal deities and symbolical representations, such as the serpent and the phallus, which the Ancient Aryans abominated. Shiva and Vishnu have taken only their names, and that also in part, from the sacred books of the Aryans.[1] Both belong to a period anterior to the Aryan intrusion. Shiva's prototype is found in the Indus Valley, and Vishnu's most popular *avatar*, Krishna, is an aboriginal dark-hued deity who stoutly resisted the Aryan invaders. The Dravidians preserved the older forms of worship and have thoroughly and irretrievably impregnated Aryan Hinduism with their beliefs and practices.

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[1] lxv. [2] xci p. 118. [3] xxv p. 219. [4] xxii p. 43.

A similar process is to be seen in Indonesia, though there it is not Aryan belief and Dravidian worship, but Hinduism and the proto-Malayan religions. This proto-Malayan religious system is long antecedent to Hinduism in this region. When Hinduism entered, with its highly complex worship, and its well-organised language and script, it eradicated many features of the primitive Proto-Malayan culture. But the old cultural modes are nonetheless fundamental to the Indonesian complex, and Hinduism was never able to blot them out completely. When the heavy hand of Hindu orthodoxy was removed from the Indian colonial empire many archaic forms of art expression reappeared in the region. The figures depicted in the Panataram reliefs of Java (1370), for instance, show Malayo-Polynesian rather than Indian influence. There is a curious mixture of diabolical, human and animal forms; grotesque features on monstrous figures; a fantastic treatment of trees and clouds, all of which relate to a prehistoric, pre-Hindu period of Indonesian art.

Under the impetus of modern national movements many other archaic forms, long submerged by Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, but embedded in the racial psyche, are reappearing in all these areas. Indian culture was but a tenacious integument beneath which flowed the living sap of the old ways, dating from times before Buddha and even Brahma were ever heard of.

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[1] lxxxi p. 162.

Perhaps the newcomers who came to Funan from the West did not come ultimately from India; or at any rate, not from India alone, but from further west, from the Central Asian steppe, or even the Iranian plateau.

The racial types delineated in the reliefs and statues in and around Angkor are varied and instructive. The *asuras,* the demons of Hindu mythology, are depicted as malevolent, ugly and brutal, even if at times heroic. Some of the faces in the Bayon strongly recall the Sumerian bas-reliefs. Frequently one comes across a head with crinkly pepper-corn hair, thick heavy lips, broad nose, slit eyes, high cheekbones: very Mongolian, or Negroid, or proto-Malayan. . . .

But, also prominently portrayed in this gallery of portraits, and usually among the aristocracy and kingly classes, is a type distinctly Indo-European, with prominent nose and "Aryan" features.[1] The *devas* or gods who oppose the *asuras* in the Churning-of-the-Ocean sculptures are of this category: very grave, dignified, imperious. Some of them are recognisably Central Asian and Scythian. Often we see a Vishnu or a Khmer king of kings with features that could have come from Iran. The profiles of some of the warriors are austere, handsome, even Hellenic.

The art of the early pre-Angkorean period of Cambodia is related on the one hand to the Dvaravati or Mon-Indian culture of Siam, and on the other to the Pallava art of South India. From the Pallavas the Khmers received, among other things, the triple-flexure pose of their statues, the Brahmanical religion, the royal suffix *varman* and the legend of the royal *nagi* ancestress who founded their dynasty.[2]

But the origin of the Pallavas is itself an unsolved problem. Though they came from South India it is fairly well established that they were not of Dravidian origin; their culture bore traces of northern influence and their records were written in Indo-Aryan languages,[1] chiefly Prakrit. Some authorities, notably P. T. Srinivas Iyangar and J. Allan, identify them with the Pahlavas, or Persians from north-west India, who migrated to the Telugu and Tamil regions in the early centuries of the present era; from this region successive waves of adventurous pioneers established colonies overseas.[2]

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[1] xxiv p. 55. [2] lxxii p. 11.

It is a fascinating speculation since it connects up with the Aryan faces of the Khmer idols, with the Sasanian cylindrical coronets of the pre-Angkorean statues, with Jayavarman II's innovation of the divine-king notion, which Alexander the Great borrowed from Persepolitan Iran; with the fact that though the Cambodians now practice cremation, they, like the Ancient Persians, once used to expose their dead outside the cities, as Chou Ta-kuan and others relate.

The theory could be profitably pursued, for there are several suggestive guideposts. According to certain writers the coastal strip that forms the bulge of Annam was for some time after the first century A.D. inhabited by Indonesian people, with a Caucasoid element, who also settled in the Mekong valley.[3] Paul Pelliot quotes a Chinese author of the third century A.D. who relates that during the time of the early Funanese dynasty there were seven-sailed vessels engaged in commerce in the Indian ocean, large enough to carry up to 700 persons, and that these ships were Indian, Chinese—and Persian.[4]

About the middle of the fourth century a certain Chu Chan-t'an ruled Funan. His Indian name was probably Chandana, and the record of his reign suggests that he usurped power. The eminent scholar George Coedès, supporting his view by arguments drawn from several artistic finds, held that Chandan was a royal title among the Indo-Scythians or Kushans, and that Chu Chan-t'an was the leader of a branch of the Kushans who had been expelled from the Ganges valley by Chandragupta, and had migrated to Funan.[1]

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[1] xxii p. 25. [2] xxii p. 25. [3] xxii p. 20. [4] xxii p. 22.

Victor Goloubew suggested in 1924 that the legends that derive the Funan dynasty from a union of a Brahmin and a *nagi* may be the recollection of a very remote totemic organisation extending back beyond India, and he refers to serpent clans in Ancient Persian and South Russian myths. Herodotus relates the myth of the sojourn of Hercules in Scythia in search of his lost mare, and tells of how he mated with Echidna, half woman, half serpent, and left a bow for his son Scythes.[2]

Funan first came into direct official relations with India as a result of the high eulogy bestowed on that country by a visitor who came " from a land west of India, called T'an-yang ". Fascinated by these tales the ruler despatched an embassy to India, and it returned with a present of four Scythian horses.[3] Spirited war-horses are depicted in the bas-reliefs of Angkor Vat, although they are not indigenous and in fact vanished with the Khmers, the Cambodian horses of today being little and spiritless.

It is interesting, furthermore, to note that a town called Kambuja existed in ancient Gandhara, which lay within the eastern orbit of Ancient Persian influence, and that Yunnan was itself referred to as Gandhara till as late as the 13th century A.D.[4] In this important region in north-western India a significant Indo-Greek school of sculpture flourished, with strong influences from Parthia. The " wet-drapery " folds of the Gandhara Buddha we find faithfully duplicated in the Khmer models.[5] If we insist that these came via the

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[1] xxii p. 23. [2] xxii p. 27. [3] xxii p. 21. [4] lxxx p. 22. [5] xxiv p. 55.

Pallavas, we also discern Persian influence in the Pallava art of India, including Amaravati.[1] Quaritch Wales discovered in the remains of an ancient sanctuary in the harbour of Takuapa many shards of early pottery, Chinese and Persian.[2]

Also worthy of note is the fact that the Saka (Scythian) era was in use in the Pallava regions, and was introduced into Funan by the colonists.[3] Furthermore, the alphabetic system first introduced from India into Funan resembled the famous 2nd century inscriptions of Vo-Canh in Champa, which, according to Majumdar, are written in Sanskrit in the Kushan characters of Northern India.[4]

And how the Khmer achievement appears to an outsider with no technical appreciation of ancient styles but with an intelligent comprehension of their salient features may be seen in Sitwell's conclusion: " It must seem curious that there appears to be so little of India, still less of China in the Cambodian monuments, so much more of Ur and Babylon and Nineveh, of the great cities of Persia, Assyria and Mesopotamia."[5]

We still do not know who the Khmers were. But it seems highly probable that ethnic and cultural influences extending at least as far back as Persia contributed to their civilisation.

Chenla

The empire of Funan extended over a number of contiguous states, northwards, towards Laos, eastwards, as far as Annam, and in the south, about half-way down the length of the Malay peninsula. All of these states were troublesome, but the most recalcitrant was the northern lacustrine principality called by the Chinese Chenla, but calling itself Kambuja, after its founder Kambu.

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[1] xxii p. 27. [2] cix. [3] xxii p. 27. [4] xxi p. 19. [5] xcix p. 64.

Cambodian legend has several versions about Kambu's origin, and often makes no distinction between him and Kaundinya. One story relates that he was a Brahmin sage of the Solar dynasty who married the *apsara* Mera. From Mera, gift of Shiva, the origin of the name " Khmer " is sometimes traced. Another legend says that Kambu's wife was a *naga* princess, the *naga* being the many-headed serpent of Hindu mythology that Khmer art has elevated to the status of a major deity. In Cambodian myth the *nagas* are descended from the cosmic serpent and Indra's daughter, and have the power of assuming human shape.

To provide a suitable kingdom for his daughter's husband the serpent king drank the waters around the Tonle Sap, and thus " conquered from the mud " an immense domain. Today Cambodians with a nice sense of history like to interpret this feat as an irrigation system built by their ancestors, or an early attempt to " drain the marshes ".

The conflicting legends concerning Kambu are confirmed about two things: that he came from outside the realm, probably from the south or the west, and that he was a Brahmin. The spheres of Indian cultural influence have been so strongly imbued with the Brahmin complex that it is natural to assume that all those who founded dynasties in the Indian colonies were, or at any rate became retrospectively, Brahmins. Nothing less than divine paternity would do for Alexander the Great, the Pharaohs, the Maya kings and Huang-ti, so why not for Kaundinya who established Funan, and for Kambu who sired the Khmers?

Independence movements have a hoary tradition. In the first decade of the seventh century Kambuja, descended from Indra's daughter and a *naga* king, proclaimed its independence from Funan, descended from an aboriginal queen and a mere adventurer, albeit Brahmin. The Khmer chroniclers might have recorded such an event in such terms.

A 7th century inscription says that Bhavavarman, the Chenla ruler, turned to Funan and " seized the throne by force." The hereditary line of ministers, " of good counsel, experienced and versed in law " who had selflessly served the last of the Funans, as selflessly now served the first of the Chenlas.[1]

Funan was soon forgotten. Within a few centuries only the name survived, and the Chinese themselves did not know the location of the country which their ancient historical records referred to as Funan. Its existence was re-discovered by European orientalists of the 19th century who, fixed its position anywhere between Tonkin and Burma.[2]

Modern scholars attribute the downfall of Funan to economic attenuation. Alas for romance, Funan fell because Chenla controlled the fish and rice trade of the Tonle Sap and its environs. " As Egypt is the gift of the River ", writes Brodrick, " so Cambodia is the Gift of the Lake."[3] And the Lake meant a treasure of fish; it was so rich in fish that in the dry season when the level of the water receded the oars of the boatmen were obstructed by them.[4] It would be interesting to trace the influence of fishing on a colonising people. Perhaps fish and empire go closer together than we know.

The Kambujas were an energetic, aspiring and bloodthirsty people. Even the common people carried arms, and the simplest quarrels often ended in a bloody contest. Their religious rites were, for a time, influenced by those of their sanguinary neighbours, the Chams of Champa, and human sacrifices used to be performed by the early Chenla kings, the king himself officiating at the ceremony at a midnight service on a hill-temple guarded by soldiers. Succession to the throne was no facile matter governed by divine revelation and heredity. Only the strong ascended the uneasy and perilous pedestal of the early Khmer kings, and only the vigilant remained there for any length of time. Until the royal dynasty was firmly established, succession was largely a matter of bloody contests, usurpations, plots and assassinations.

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[1] xxii p. 42. [2] xxii p. 12. [3] xxiii p. 20. [4] lxxiii p. 225.

Fan Chin-Sheng (A.D. 228), since we know only their Chinese names was assassinated by his successor, Fan Chan (230), himself killed by his cousin Fan Ch'ang (240), himself killed by Fan Hsun (240) . . . . and so it went on. When the Chenlas established themselves, it was again by force that Bhavavarman, basing his claim to the throne on his mother's rights, usurped the kingdom. Not for nothing did the famous inscription on the door-pillar of the old brick sanctuary at Hanchey, just above Kompong Cham, refer to the " burden of royalty."[1]

The Armour of God

The Khmers, like the Chinese, had a marked predilection for shifting their capitals. The Chenla metropolis in the sixth century was, at various times, at Sreshthapura (Ba-dom) in the north, Bhavapura (Prei Nokor) in the south, and Sambhupura (Sambor) on the Mekong between the two.

In 610 A.D. Isanavarman I (610-635), " *protégé* of Shiva ", ascended the throne of the Chenla kings and assured his security by first mutilating his brothers and other potential rivals. He then mopped up the last areas of the Funan dominion and extended his conquests up to the Mon kingdom of Dvaravati, or Lavo, and northwards beyond central Laos. Chenla reached its apogee during his reign. " Suzerain of the three realms " he built his capital east of Sambhupura near what is now known as Sambor of Stu'ng Sen, and named it Isanapura.

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[1] xxii p. 42.

At Sambor Prei Kuk, near Kompong Thom, Isanavarman erected a *prasat* or temple, set up like a step pyramid, which is one of the earliest examples of pre-Angkorean brick architecture in existence. Some of these brick structures built before the Khmers had acquired the art of raising their immense stone cathedrals, look very much like the Cham shrines whose ruins are to be seen in Lower Annam, and of which perfected types were later evolved at the temple-city of Mi-Son. They were arranged on a square terrace, were rectangular in plan, and the tower was composed of diminishing platforms ornamented with diminutive tower motifs.

The Khmer shrine is a tower built over a sanctuary containing either a relic of the Buddha, an image of Vishnu or Shiva, or a large stone *linga*. In the earlier types, from the 7th to 9th centuries, the *prasat* was in kiln-burnt brick, later in stone. The bricks were held together with a kind of vegetable cement the secret of which is lost.[1] At first the *prasat* was an isolated shrine built on a high plinth, but later a number of such shrines were grouped together either on a common platform or in ascending terraces, suggesting the celestial mount, Meru, the abode of the gods. The design was invariably square and the entrance was always from the east. Angkor Vat was an elaboration of this simple plan, with galleries and arcaded corridors linking the various points, though, exceptionally, its entrance was from the west.

At an early period in their history the Khmers developed the notion of the esoteric relationship between this world and the cosmic order, believing that the works of man were meant to symbolise their cosmological ideal, and that in order to ensure prosperity, human works, whether kingdoms, capitals, palaces or sanctuaries, had to be replicas of divine prototypes whose delineations were known to the traditional builders and artists. Khmer architects carried out this idea with immense elaboration. The central mountain of gold in the abode of the gods, Mount Meru, was reproduced in the Baphuon and the Bayon in the centre of Yasodharapura; the walls and moats around the cities and sanctuaries were the mountains and seas that encircled the universe; the *naga* balustrade represented the rainbow which was regarded as the pathway between the worlds of gods and men; the four-faced towers represented the ubiquity and everywhereness of the Blessed One. Heaven and earth were linked by these resemblances, and the divine spirits took their residence in sanctuaries auspiciously and symbolically constructed to represent their own abodes.

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[1] xxii p. 70.

The Ambitious King

The eighth century was a period of turmoil, ushered in by the reign of Jayadevi, widow of the previous monarch. Troubles gathered around her and she recorded her plaint for posterity to read, in an inscription only recently discovered. A group of pretenders sprang up, and the country was split up into numerous principalities, and these slowly fused into two main divisions known as Upper and Lower Chenla, or Chenla of the Land comprising the Laos states to the west of Annam, and Chenla of the Water consisting of the area of the Great Lake and the Lower Mekong.

To add to the domestic confusion, certain piratical adventurers from Java, " ferocious, pitiless, dark-hued people whose food was more horrible than that of vampires ", according to a contemporary inscription,[1] started to ravage and terrorise the coastal districts between Champa and Chenla, and held part of Kambuja in thrall for the Sailendra kingdom. An Arab merchant named Sulaiman who travelled through this region in 851 tells of a Kambujan monarch who was captured and beheaded in his own palace by an invading king from Zabaj in Java, probably Sailendra.

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[1] xxii p. 67.

According to the legend related by Sulaiman, the Khmer monarch, who was a young and impetuous ruler, expressed a desire to see the head of the Maharaja of Zabaj brought to him on a plate. Hearing of this rash ambition the Maharaja invaded Kambuja at the head of a large expedition, took the capital, surrounded the palace and captured the king. After giving the youthful sovereign a short lecture on the virtues of humility he cut off his head, " so that no one might be tempted to undertake a task above his power, or desire more than the share allotted to him by Providence ". The council of ministers was instructed to choose a new monarch in accordance with the ancient custom of Kambuja. If possible the candidate was to be a male, related to the last king within the fifth degree of relationship, but if no male candidate was considered suitable a royal princess was to be chosen.[1]

The Maharaja returned to Zabaj with the late king's head. No harm was done to the local inhabitants and nothing was taken from the Khmer realm, and peace soon returned. The new Khmer king on rising in the morning first turned his face in the direction of Zabaj and prostrated himself, to indicate his homage to the Maharaja.

Jayavarman II

Perhaps a prince from the court of the beheaded king was also carried off to the Zabaj kingdom so that he might acquaint himself with the arts of sovereignty. If so, he must have had opportunities of making an exploratory tour of the

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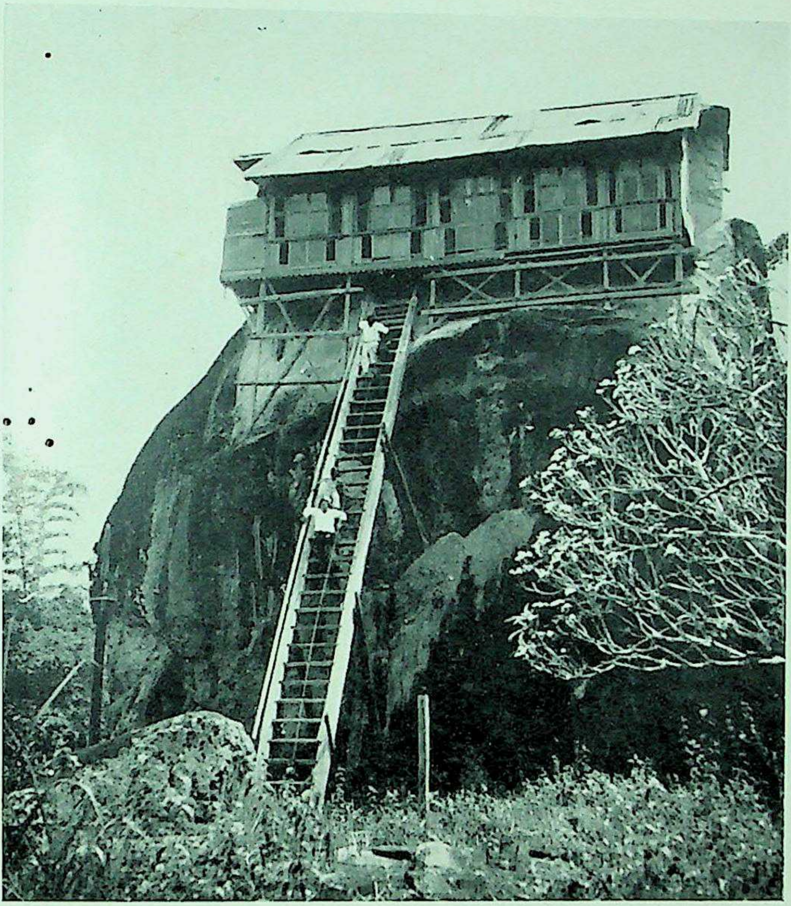
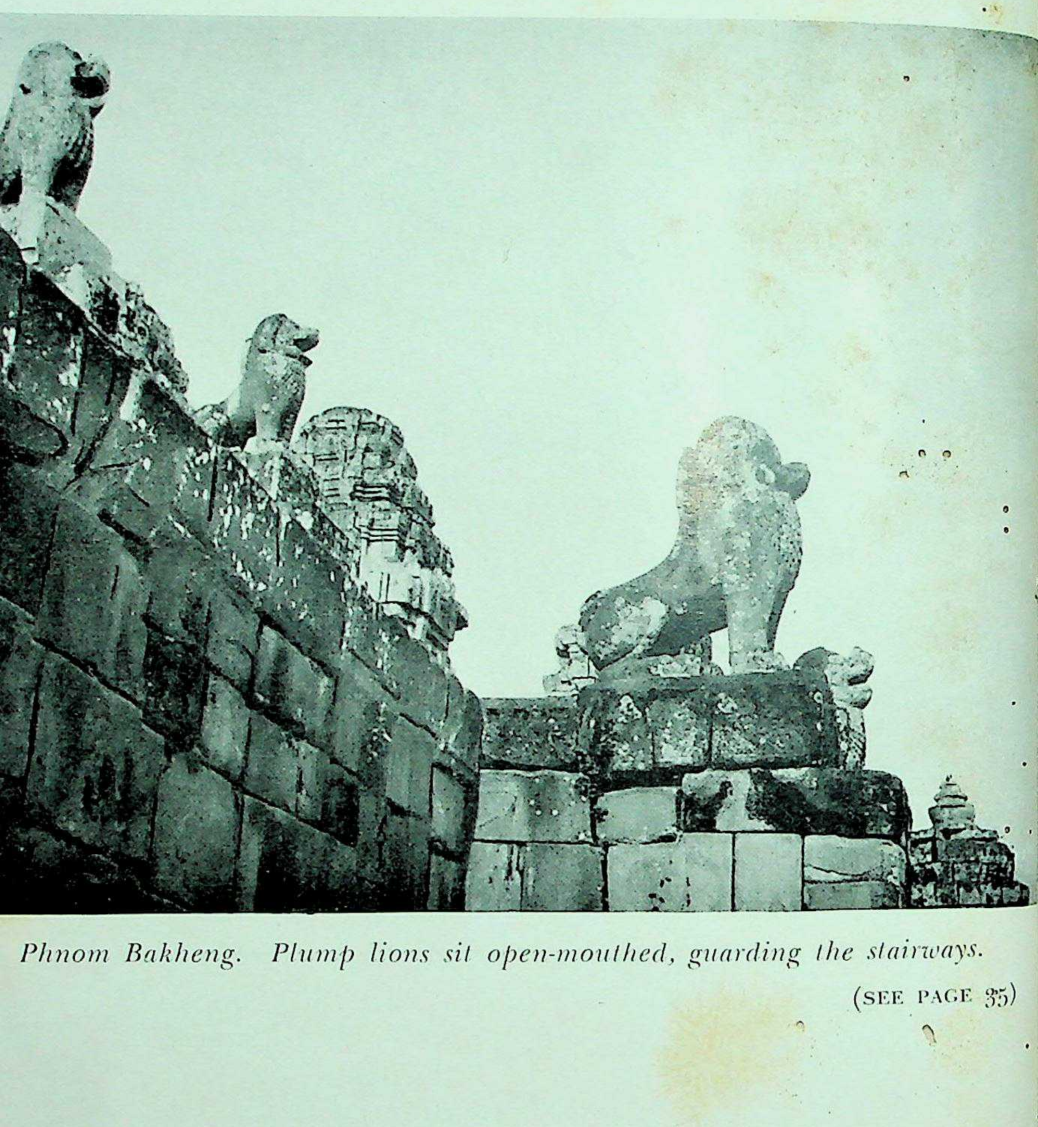
[1] xxii p. 81.



On the Kulen Hills. On a hump of rock Vishnu sleeps.
(SEE PAGE 33)



Phnom Bakheng. Plump lions sit open-mouthed, guarding the stairways.

(SEE PAGE 35)

kingdom; he must have seen the noble temples on the Dieng plateau, and also the mighty *stupa* of Borobudur, only recently completed. He must also have carefully noted the excellent administration of the realm and memorised its main features.

When he returned to his native land he had a new vision of what his country should be. His first task was to form the countless warring village groups into an instrument of imperial power. From this unified state he laid the foundations of the Khmer Empire, and with an intuition worthy of the Pharaohs and the Cæsars he established the cult of the *devaraja* or god-king, the worship of the divinity incarnate in the monarch, as the only means of sanctifying his succession.

In this undertaking he was helped by a young man, Brahmin of course, with the title of Shivakaivalya, who in his advisory capacity served the king as the famous prelate Kautilya had once served Chandragupta Maurya. The king rewarded him by making him supreme pontiff and forbidding any other but the line of Shivakaivalya to officiate at the royal ceremonies. Like the monarchy the pontificate was strongly matrilineal.[1]

Khmer tradition traces the relationship of this king, Jayavarman II (790-854) to the old dynasty of Funan through the maternal line; but this was probably just a piece of priestly fiction fabricated to ensure loyalty to the crown. The monarch was in all likelihood an usurper after all, as some authorities think. An inscription from an eleventh century stele refers to him as " a great lotus which has no stem, he arose like a new blossom."[2]

Shivakaivalya gave ecclesiastical sanction to the usurpation, and bestowed his Brahmanical blessings on the resurgent monarchy. The miraculous *linga* obtained from Shiva through the intermediation of the priest was presented to the king in the course of an elaborate ceremony that took place in a shrine set up on a holy mountain. Henceforth to the strength of the Khmer arms was added the sanctity of the divine right of the royal rule. The humbling Javanese connection was finally severed and the independence of the Khmer state ceremonially proclaimed, and Jayavarman ruled as "guardian of the honour of the solar race of Sri Kambu."[1] At this period, Charlemagne in Europe and Haroun al-Rashid in Baghdad were at the height of their power.

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[1] xxii p. 90. [2] xxiv p. 144.

Jayavarman II was not only a great conqueror, he was also a great builder. Legend relates how the god Indra wooed his mother, a Khmer princess, in a gentle rain of scented blossoms—the Khmer version of Zeus and Danæ. The princess gave birth to a child, named Preas Ket Mealea, destined for great achievements. At the same time there was born another child, this time to a goddess whom Indra had compelled, for her sins, to be espoused to an impoverished Chinese peasant. This child was Preas Pusnokar, who from infancy made wondrous temple designs and carved astonishing images in stone. Indra took both these children up to heaven that they might see the wonders of his many celestial mansions. Unable to keep them in heaven long, as the other gods objected to the foul odour of men, Indra sent them to Kambuja, enjoining the young architect to reproduce any temple or palace that his son might choose for his own earthly residence. But his son, Preas Ket Mealea, hardly dared to select an edifice more ostentatious than one of the cowsheds of Indra's paradise. This cowshed copied in stone became his palace when he ascended the throne, and was one of the wonders of the world. To the young king Indra

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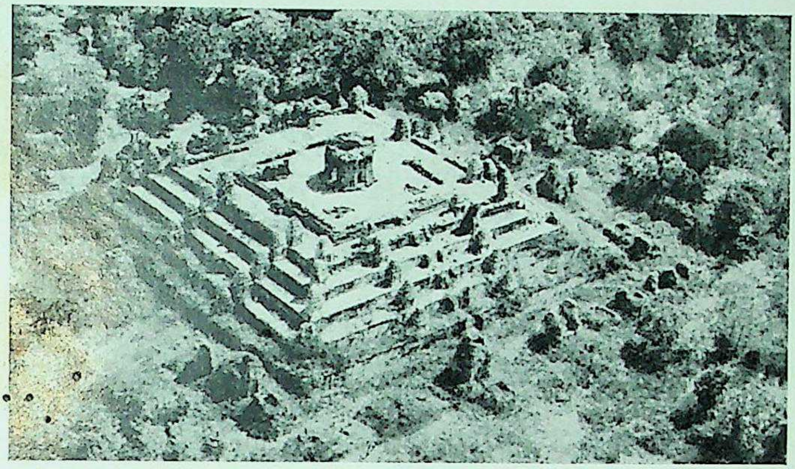
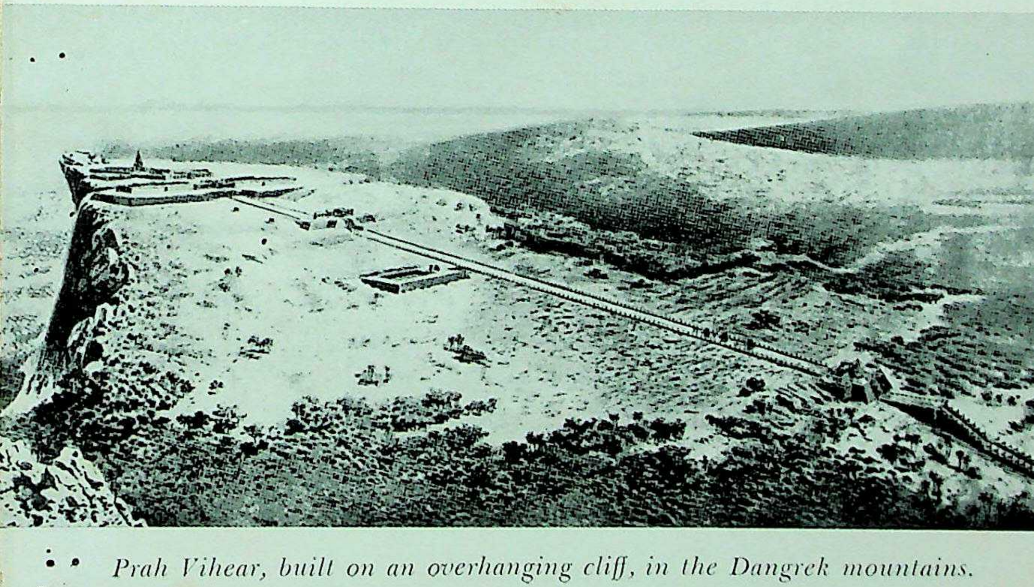
[1] xxii p. 90.



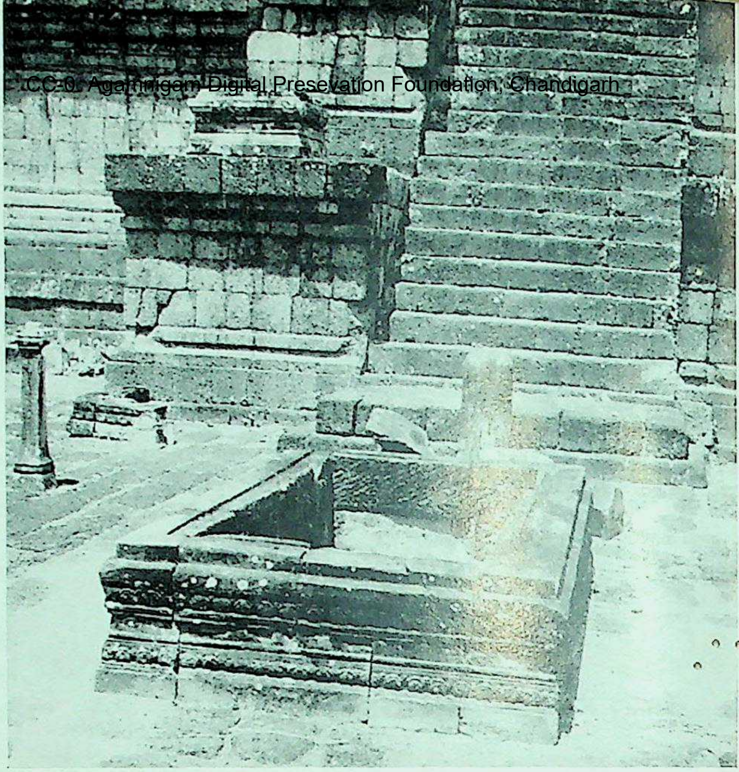
Phnom Bakheng from the air. Many such shrines lie buried in the Cambodian jungle.

(SEE PAGE 35)



Prah Vihear, built on an overhanging cliff, in the Dangrek mountains.

(SEE PAGE 35)



Crematory of Pre Rup. Note linga at foot of staircase.
(SEE PAGE 37)

A shaft of sunlight illuminates the interior of Prasat Kravan.
(SEE PAGE 37)

also confided, so the legend goes, the sacred sword, *Prah Khan,* "the lightening of Indra", which is still kept in the Royal Palace at Phnom Penh in the custody of the *baku* or Buddhist representatives of the old Khmer Brahmanical ecclesiastics.

Among the capitals of Jayavarman II were Indrapura (now Thbong Khmum, east of Kompong Cham), Hariharalaya (near Roluos), Amarendrapura (Ak Yom), and Mahendraparvata (on the Kulen Hills). It was from this last named place that the fine-grained sandstone was later to be laboriously quarried for the building of Angkor the Magnificent, thirty miles away.

Jayavarman II used the Kulen Hills as a fortress in the 9th century, and it was a natural stronghold ideally suited to prolonged defence. On this plateau the Khmer monarch built a number of brick tower-sanctuaries and pyramid-temples, showing a style much in advance of the older Khmer traits of the 8th century, and revealing influences both from Java as well as from Champa:[1] richly carved lintels, decorated pediments, pleasing proportions . . . . the classical Khmer style was evolving.

Even today it is not easy to visit the Kulen heights. The road is difficult, the area dangerous owing to rebel bands, and the climb fatiguing. The main spur of the hills is accessible from one side by means of an ascent of over 850 worn sandstone steps, each about a foot high, slippery and treacherous. At the end of the climb there is a long walk through dense jungle which occasionally breaks into open areas of elephant grass and scattered *lichi* (kulen) trees. Ant hills abound.

Among the sights shown to visitors after six miles of this exhausting trudge is a smooth hump of rock crowned with a shed of tin and glass. A steep wooden ladder built in 1927 leads to the top of the rock. We make the rickety ascent and find ourselves in the presence of a gigantic reclining Vishnu. The figure sleeps on his left side. His toes are as large as ninepins; his eyes have been fitted with glass; his navel is luminous and reflects the light—it is also of glass. The whole image has been garishly gilded. Narrow banners with inscriptions in Chinese hang along a wire stretched near his face; joss-sticks send sinuous lines of smoke to the tin roof which splay out in varied forms. It cannot bear prolonged contemplation.

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[1] xxii p. 92.

We descend the wooden staircase and touch earth with relief. Not far away is an impression of Vishnu's foot checkered with symbolical lines and mystic signs, in some of which tiny lamps are set. A dozen village girls in diaphanous blouses are digging the earth at the base of the Vishnu rock. We watch them as they transplant the pink lilies, that grow wild in the neighbourhood, in neat rows along the path leading to the stone hump where the gilt Vishnu with his crude embellishments lies under his cheap tin shed.

How much better, we cannot help thinking, to have left him alone up there as he was, carved in rock, without the ochre cosmetic and the calico streamers, without the tin roof and the wooden ladder and, though exposed to the wind and the rain, serene, solitary and unapproachable. Even with the best intentions the garnishing of the sacrosanct can sometimes be a horrifying thing.

Phnom Bakheng

Yasovarman I (889-901) finally abandoned the ancient capital of Hariharalaya for the new site of Angkor. Around the temple of Phnom Bakheng, which he constructed, he built his capital of Yasodharapura, ten miles square, diverting and straightening the Siem Reap river to allow the construction of the eastern walls, surrounded it with an immense moat, and within the city precincts built more than 800 artificial water-ponds. East of the capital he sank the great basin of the Eastern Baray, five and a half miles long and almost one and a half miles wide. He raised the shrines of Phnom Krom, Lolei and Phnom Bɔk, and crowned nearly every hill in the vicinity of his capital with a temple.[1] To him are also attributed a number of bridges and roads. Over the Spean Prapto river there is a viaduct of laterite, two hundred feet long, fifty feet wide, and having twenty one arches. It is flanked on either side by a parapet formed by the body of a snake whose seven-headed hood is upreared at the entrance of the bridge. This *naga* parapet is henceforth to haunt Khmer buildings and we shall meet it again and again in Angkor and its environs.

Also started during his reign was the construction of one of the most remarkable Khmer sanctuaries, which took more than two centuries to complete, the temple of Prah Vihear, raised on an inaccessible spur of the Dangrek mountains about eighty miles north of Angkor. It is laid out in successive courts connected by a causeway more than 860 yards in length at the terminus of which is the principal sanctuary, erected on the end of an overhanging cliff.

Phnom Bakheng, the capital of Yasovarman I, is situated just outside the later capital of Angkor Thom. It is a Shaivite temple, dedicated to the phallus. Built on a hill, it is reached by stairs on four sides, of which few traces remain. The temple itself is a series of five mounting terraces, each ornamented with little towers, one hundred in all, geometrically disposed and cleverly directing the eye ever upward. Plump lions sit open-mouthed, guarding the stairways. From the topmost terrace one can see for miles around, temples and shrines, buried in the jungle beneath an immense area of thick vegetation.

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[1] xxii p. 110.

Except for a period of twenty-five years, Angkor remained the capital city of the Khmers for five centuries. In this early city of Yasodharapura, now defined by a few mounds and derelict landmarks, we find the germinal idea of the later Khmer metropolis: the square plan, the main temple occupying an elevated position in the exact centre of the town; the wide moat and high circumambient walls, pierced by four gates; the town planned in straight lines and rectangles; the roads, except for a circuit around the centrally-placed temple, directly connecting the opposite gates, and thus dividing the town into four administrative quarters. It was a picturesque and practical plan and was a credit to the creative imagination of the Khmer architects.

There is an abundance of inscriptions covering the reign of Yasovarman I—greater than that of any other Khmer monarch—and in all of them flattery is rampant. " In all the sciences and sports, in all the arts, writings and languages, in dancing and in singing he was supreme. He protected the earth. He caused the Creator to wonder why He had made a rival by creating so mighty a king. At the sight of this great monarch, whose brilliance was difficult to support, his enemies bowed their heads saying, ' It is the sun '."[1]

In spite of the laudation of this " unique bundle of virtues whose power was fatal to his enemies," it is not known that he waged a single victorious war. The legend that he conquered Champa is without foundation. It is not the only legend concerning him that research has disproved. Others were that he became a leper and retired from the capital,

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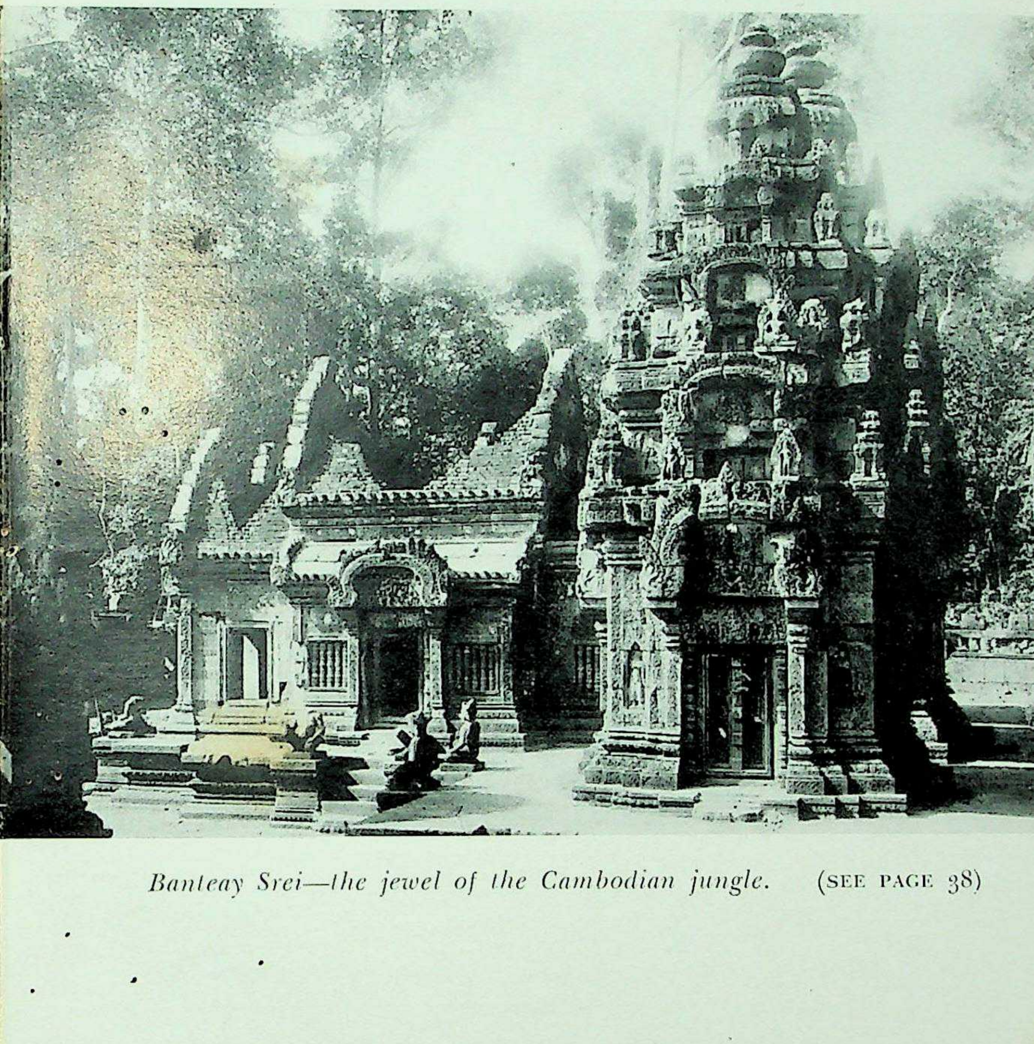
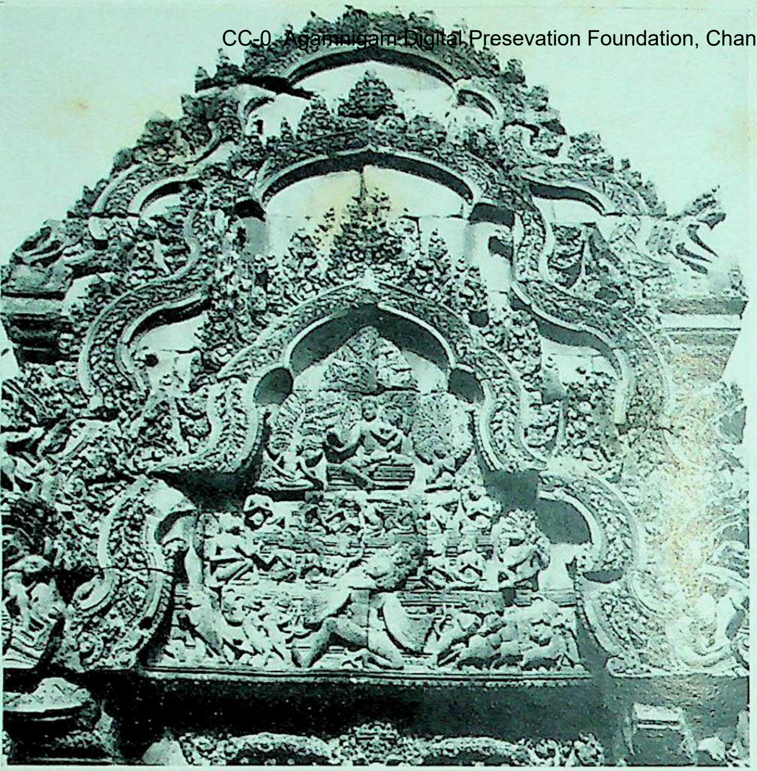
[1] xxii p. 113.

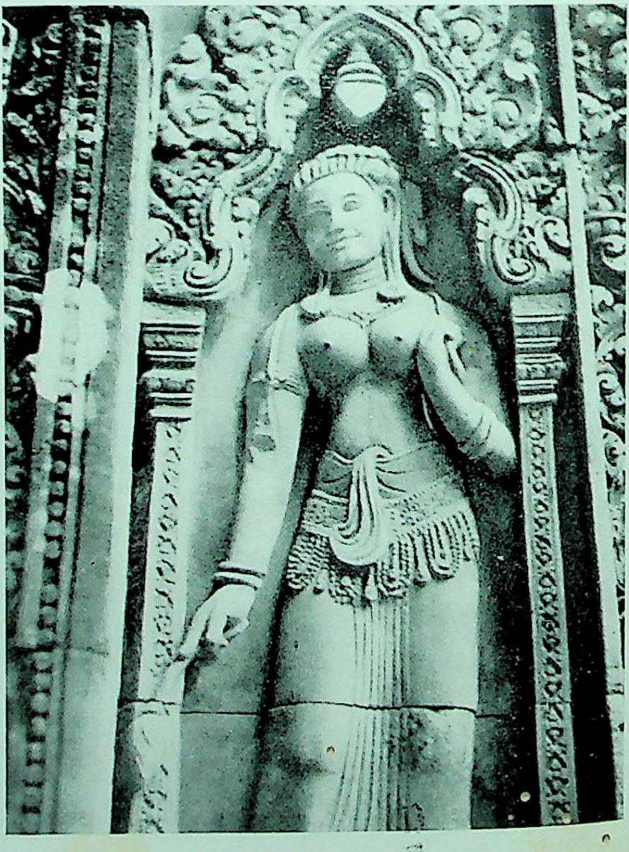


Banteay Srei—the jewel of the Cambodian jungle. (SEE PAGE 38)



Decorated pediment in Banteay Srei.
(SEE PAGE 39)

Apsara from Banteay Srei.
(SEE PAGE 40)



and that because of his affliction no other king took his name. The tradition of his leprosy is not established, and modern investigators have brought to light the existence of a second Yasovarman.

But as a man of peace, tolerant of all religions, as a lover of beauty and the creator of some of the finest of early Khmer masterpieces, he deserves to rank with the greatest of the Khmer kings.

The period between 920 and 967 was one of minor building activity: Prasat Kravan (921), Baksei Chamkrong (947), the Koh Ker group (931-950) about 100 miles north of Angkor; Prasat Banteay Pir Chan (937); the Eastern Mebon (952); Leak Neang (960); Pre Rup (961). The name of the last temple signifies "the turning of the corpse" and was probably associated with cremation rites. A stone trough at the foot of the eastern stairway is said to have been the place of burning.

How do the students of religion account for the neglect of Brahma, the central deity of the Hindu trinity, who should legitimately be given the foremost place in Hindu worship? In India there is only one important temple dedicated to Brahma, at Pushkar; and in Cambodia also only one, Prasat Banteay Pir Chan.[1]

Prasat Kravan is well worth a visit, though after having had a surfeit of dilapidated brick sanctuaries on the Petit and Grand Circuits it is easy to pass by this ruined quintette of shrines as if it were just another derelict sanctuary, if anything more derelict than the usual run of shrines around Angkor. But the central *prasat* has panels of exquisite bas-reliefs which are worth seeing if the sun is overhead to illuminate the dark interior. Then the west wall lights up a fine Vishnu standing below an enormous lizard, and ranged around him in extended rows are worshippers, both male and female, hands folded in adoration.

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[1] xxii p. 122.

The Citadel of the Women

The temple of Banteay Srei (967), "the Citadel of the Women," is situated north-east of Angkor. To get to it you have to motor through more than twenty miles of difficult country. Your car stops in the middle of a jungle that is practically impenetrable in the rains. The last lap of your trip is a walk of about half a mile through dense forest in which the spoor of the wild elephant on your track is a common sight.

There is a small clearing, a ruined wall, a low doorway in pink stone. You step over a series of raised thresholds, and across antechambers open to the sky. Here is a little unadorned lintel; there, a decapitated column, pink and bare; a small carved chip of sandstone with a coating of white lichen. More thresholds; you bend to cross them to avoid the lintels, they are so low.

You are suddenly in the midst of three shrines, enclosed within a high wall that effectively screens them from the surrounding jungle. Those who have seen Banteay Srei might regard it as the end of their pilgrimage to Angkor. As Brodrick, seldom sentimental, who writes, "The picture I possess within myself of Banteay Srei is among the few I hope I shall carry, undimmed with me into the shades."[1]

Banteay Srei, known as Ishvarapura, was built by Rajendravarman II (944-968), "whose toe-nails shone like the diadems of rival kings,"[2] and completed by his son Jayavarman V (969-1001), "whose lion roar made hostile monarchs flee to the depths of the forest."[3] These encomiums, so ludicrous today, expressed a commendable esteem for the king. The temple erected by their devotion is not only the best of the early Khmer monuments, but one of the finest structures in all Cambodia.

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[1] xxiv p. 188. [2] xxii p. 126. [3] xxii p. 134.

The sculptors and architects who fashioned Banteay Srei are undoubtedly among the world's best. No words can do justice to the beauty of this jewel of the jungle. No picture can hope to recapture the grace of the exquisite structures, or adequately convey the impression one receives on first coming into contact with this masterpiece in pink stone. The Moghuls were reputed to build like giants and finish like jewellers. The Khmers too built like giants—the largest buildings ever raised by man, Banteay Chhmar and Angkor Vat, were their handiwork—and here in isolated and abandoned Banteay Srei we see how they too could finish like jewellers. There is nothing gigantic about the shrines, but each one is a gem, bright and colourful in the sunlight, clean and delicately carved, with incredible precision and crispness.

In comparison Angkor Vat is cyclopean. It overwhelms you. It subdues the imagination with its immensity. In its presence you can only stand and stare. But it remains an empty shell; a hulk of lichen-covered greyness. Inside, its long corridors are empty; the Vishnus and Buddhas who cast their dismal shadows on the worn floors are museum pieces, standing there by virtue of their size, and by the grace of the *Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient*.

But Banteay Srei somehow gives the illusion of a living and only temporarily deserted shrine. The Hanumans and the bird-headed *dvarapalas* who sit guarding the doorways are petrified substitutes of creatures who must soon return. You raise your eyes to the decorated lintels and see wonderfully carved reliefs showing the heat and struggle of the old battles of Sugriva, Hanuman and Rama against Ravana and his hosts. All over the pediments there is evidence of life and activity, and the stone on which the living scene is carved is pink and fresh and beautiful and bright. There are a number of *apsaras*, so exquisite and graceful that you cease to wonder why the gods stopped to see them dancing. And each of them has a smile, the Angkor Smile, benign, gentle, seductive . . . .

We are not left to contemplate this vision for long. There is a sudden surge of visitors. A wave of tourists equipped as we are with guide-books and cameras, and full of chatterwag and recently acquired knowledge. And we realise suddenly and sadly that like Angkor Vat this too is an empty shell, and that this hallowed place of one-time abundant worship where the gods of old were adored for centuries, is not really any more alive, and that its deceptive movement is only a temporary vision. The illusion in our day must always finally vanish with the sound of tourists, some such as we contributing, with the sight of the jeep by which we travelled, and the modern comforts of the Grand Hotel where we must now return.

Suryavarman I

About three decades after the completion of Banteay Srei, the Buddhist Suryavarman I (1002-1049), an usurper from Ligor, which is now Siamese Malaya, became master of the region around the Great Lake and the lower Mekong and Menam valleys.

The two greatest Khmer kings, Suryavarman I and Jayavarman VII were both Buddhists. Both successfully contended against their enemies, within the realm and without. Suryavarman's successor, even though he was a Shaivite, suffered a popular rebellion for his predecessor's adherence to Buddhism.[1]

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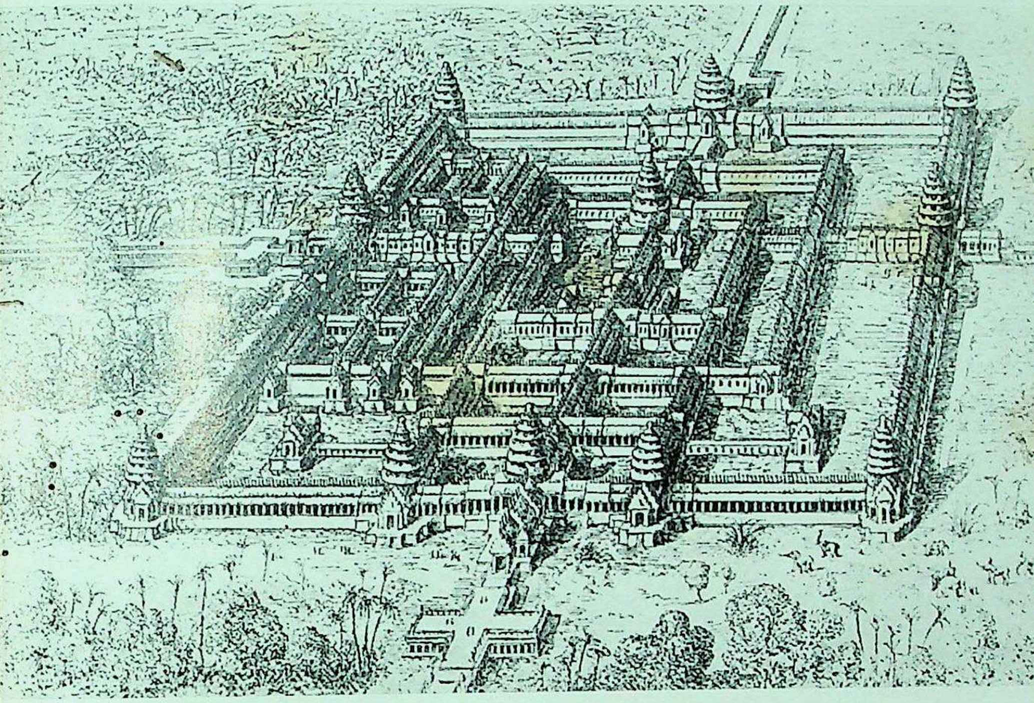
[1] xxii p. 175.



Delaporte's reconstruction of Beng Mealea—a forerunner of Angkor Vat.

(SEE PAGE 42)

Suryavarman annexed Lavo, the Mon-Indian state of Dvaravati lying on the Menam plain, later to grow into the Thai kingdom. He also started a war against Champa another Indianised state lying between his eastern borders and the sea. Champa was, in fact, always at war, with Funan, Chenla, Kambuja and the Chinese. It continued its bellicose career until the 15th century when, shrunken in size, its manpower depleted, after one final bitter struggle with Annam, it disappeared from history. Today only a few Mohammedans who both worship Allah and revere the local tribal deities, claim descent from the once formidable Chams.

The wars with the western Thai Kingdom and the eastern Champa state were to have disastrous consequences for the Khmers, for it was these two vengeful principalities who were finally to destroy their empire.

That calamity, however, was still two centuries away, and was not even beginning to disturb the peace of Suryavarman I. In fact, he records on the eastern gateway of his capital the oath of allegiance made to him by nearly four thousand kings, princes, and officials, " in the presence of the sacred fire and the holy jewel ". The oath ends with the terrible malediction: " If we conceal ourselves to avoid keeping this oath strictly, may we be reborn in the thirty-second hell as long as the sun and moon shall last".[1]

Suryavarman's capital was first at Prah Khan of Kompong Svai (not to be confused with the later Prah Khan of Angkor) and was subsequently shifted to Angkor. In many of his buildings he introduced the practice of gilding the temple towers and domes, which was then current in the Mon kingdoms of Thaton and Pegu. The most notable of his works were Ta Keo (in part), the North and South Kleangs for the accommodation of visiting officials and viceroys, the palace of Phimeanakas in Angkor Thom and the sanctuary of Phnom Chisor. He added new features to the temple of Prah Vihear, and also erected on a site rivalling Prah Vihear in majesty and picturesqueness, the superb temple of Vat Phu.

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[1] xxii p. 151.

Before Angkor Vat was erected the successors of Suryavarman had built the Baphuon, having towers 150 feet high crowned with copper and containing what must have been the finest reliefs in Angkor, now destroyed, and also the western Mebon, Beng Mealea or " Lotus Pond " one of the largest of Khmer temples and in many ways the forerunner of Angkor Vat. Then there were Prah Palilay, Prah Pithu, Chau Say Tevoda, Banteay Samre, Thommanon . . . .

We do not know the real names of most of the Khmer monuments, and there is no authority for many of the modern names given to them. In most instances arbitrary and fantastic titles have been bestowed on the sanctuaries, based on vague traditions or fanciful associations. The titles are, nevertheless, Cambodian and somehow apt. In the Mekong valley Phnom Krom, Sambor Prei Kuk, Baksei Chamkrong, all sound more appropriate and less incongruous than Indrapura, Mahendraparvata and the rest. It is odd to have the local colour and not the local name.

ZENITH

Angkor Vat

The builder of Angkor Vat, Suryavarman II (1112-1150) snatched the throne from two contending princes, and had himself annointed in a lavish ceremony, the magnitude of which had never been seen before. The king gave rich presents and made bountiful offerings: palanquins, fans, crowns, buckles, pendants, bracelets, rings, utensils, ornaments decorated with precious stones, lands, slaves and livestock.

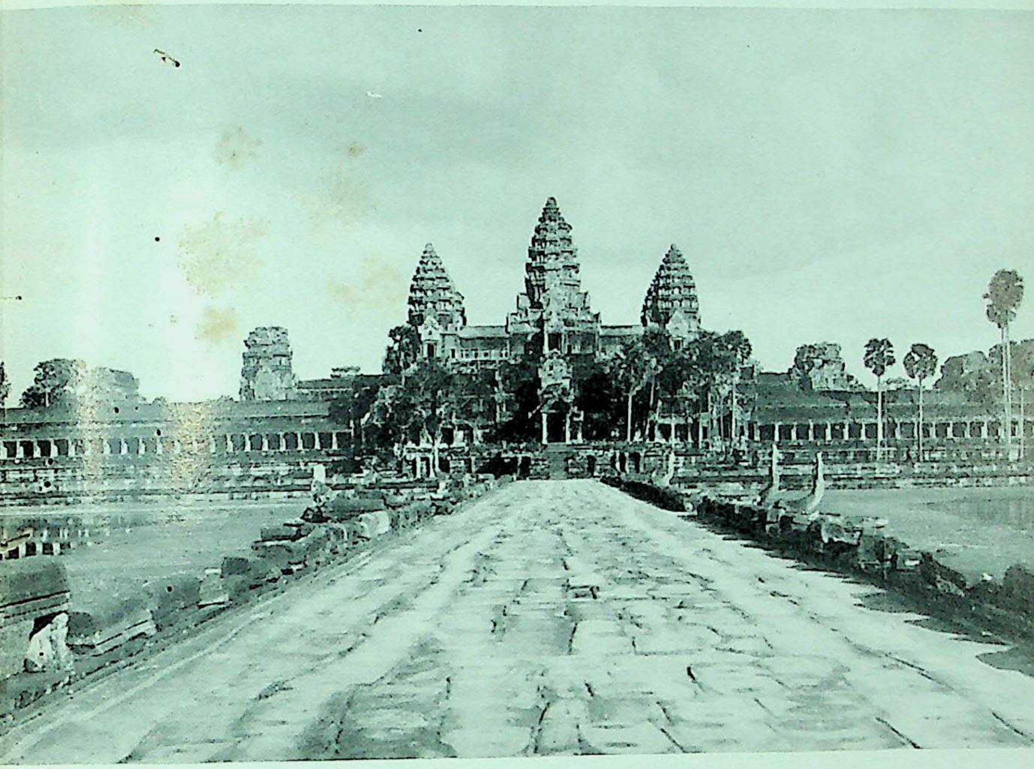
Suryavarman II was a warlike king, and many campaigns, mostly disastrous, were undertaken by him. He was unsuccessful against the Annamese, being twice defeated by them. A decade after his last battle with the Annamese he attacked Champa. Although he captured and sacked the capital his troops were finally overcome and annihilated. In spite of his pretentions he is hardly worthy of note as a warrior who spread the glory of the Khmer arms. But his name is chiefly remembered because he built that marvel of architecture, the Brahmanical temple of Angkor Vat, which is the chief glory of Cambodia and one of the most remarkable edifices in the world. It was completed after his death, just before the erection of the great Notre Dame Cathedral of Paris was started in Europe.

As we first saw Angkor Vat we felt it was part of history and mythology, like the Parthenon, Karnac, Ajanta and Persepolis. A few worshippers still burned joss-sticks before the deities, and the short-cropped women silently and unobtrusively offered their thick black hair to the sacred images. More commonly, worship is performed by the general populace in the modern Siamese-style temples with their turned-up gables, eave-finials and *garuda*-pillars, leaving the ancient sanctuaries to the tourists and the bats.

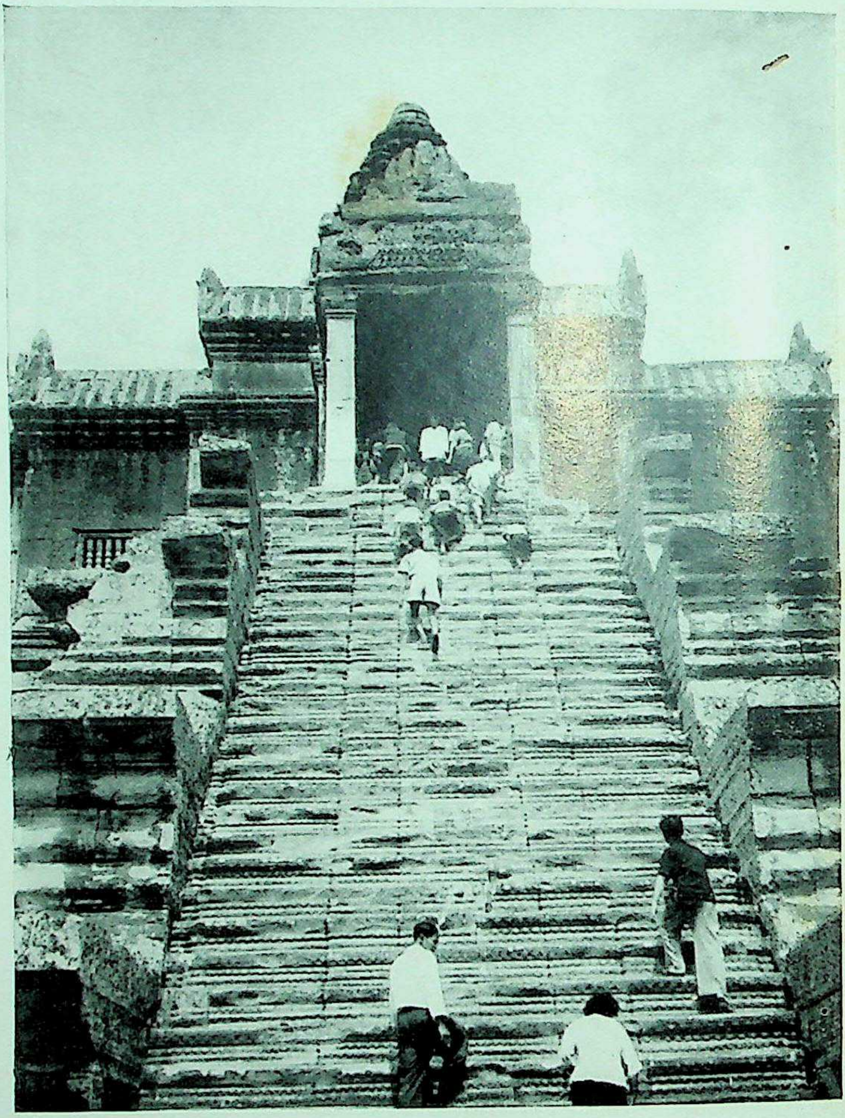
If one is visiting the site of a historic ruin it is best not to select a festive occasion for such a visit. Pomp and pageantry, colour and brilliance, the parade of princes and priests—one can conjure them all up in the mind's eye amid the ruined temples. But the prosaic bustle and hubbub of the tawdry present are hardly calculated to assist in the proper appreciation of the historic past. The Khmer ruins, it seemed to us, needed only the backdrop of the silent jungle.

When we re-visited Angkor Vat it was the Chol Chhnam, the Return of the Season, the Cambodian New Year, April 13th—14th. From far and near, from the Great Lake and the Kulen Hills, and the forests around distant Khvao and Kosder, the men and women converged on Siem Reap, the modern village six miles south of Angkor. Those who could afford the time and money even ventured from Phnom Penh and Battambang. *Route Coloniale No. 56* leading from Siem Reap to Angkor was heavy with traffic. Buses, jeeps, pedicabs and buffalo-carts conveyed men and women in gaily coloured *sampots* and monks in gamboge robes to the temples around Angkor. The entrance to Angkor Vat was monopolised by buxom Cambodian peasant women who piled their yams, peanuts, bananas and melons near the *naga* balustrade. Inside the shaded courtyards and corridors of the temple enterprising speculators, taking advantage of the prevailing atmosphere of gaiety and recklessness, spread their little checkered mats and rattled boxes of dice, while they intoned a litany to the gamblers both male and female, to try their luck on this most auspicious day.

Authorities have not quite decided whether Angkor Vat was meant to be a temple, a palace, a tomb or a mausoleum. One savant more romantic than the rest even suggests it might



Angkor Vat seen from the inner causeway. (SEE PAGE 46)



The staircase leading to the sanctuary of Angkor Vat.
"..... a veritable Jacob's Ladder ..... steps of
incredible steepness."

(SEE PAGE 48)

have been a harem, designed to accommodate the ravishing beauties of the Khmer royal household.[1] Whatever it be, it was built on a grand scale. Local tradition has it that it was raised by the gods. It is indeed a fitting attribution, for this Khmer cathedral is a truly tremendous piece of work, being one of the largest structures ever erected. Within its area it could contain all the monuments of the whole of Ancient Greece.[2]

It was built in the middle of the 12th century and was dedicated to Vishnu, though later re-dedicated to Buddha by Jayavarman VII, and is made of a hard close-grained sandstone of dark-grey, on a foundation of huge blocks of laterite.

There is a moat around the temple. It is no little trench of water such as the Rajputs dug around their fortifications, or such as encircled the castles of mediæval Europe, which a picturesque drawbridge could span. This moat is virtually a lake, artificially made, 700 feet broad and measuring over three miles around. Not so many years ago hydroplanes landed passengers from Saigon and Bangkok on its smooth surface,[3] before they moved over to the Western Baray.[4] Today naked Cambodian boys wade in with their buffaloes and splash about in those patches of water which are not choked with hyacinths and lotuses.

A majestic stone causeway bridges the moat. You promenade upon its paved surface as though strolling along the king's highway. It is thirty-six feet wide. Large enough for a cavalcade of elephants six abreast to march upon when a special occasion calls for such a pageant: the marriage of the king's son, the Washing of the Deities, or a victory over the tiresome Chams.

It is an exotic walk. On either side are to be seen the remains of a low balustrade fanning out at intervals into the uprearing hood of a seven-headed *naga*. The Khmers delighted in embellishing the approaches to their temples by preparatory avenues of serpents, griffins, gods and demons.

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[1] xxii p. 202. [2] lxxiii p. 228. [3] ii p. 87. [4] xxiv p. 122.

Half-way across the causeway a lofty storied portico confronts you, its broken tower resembling the bridge of an ocean liner. Your first glimpse of Angkor Vat from the outer entrance consists of the tops of two serrated towers in the disance rising above this obstructing portico. It is a calculated obstruction. A series of such impediments keeps up the suspense of your pilgrimage to the inner sanctuary. One gradually absorbs the atmosphere of devotion and awe until the final unveiling. The walk to the holy of holies is a slow unfolding of an architectural mystery, and all the avenues, porticos, galleries and antechambers compel an ambulatory ritual on the visiting pilgrim until he reaches the central cella.

The sloping "corrugated" sandstone roofs of the porticos seen in so many of the temples are reminiscent of an earlier wooden or terracotta era. You mount the short flight of worn steps. Within, to left and right, are grey arcaded galleries and vaulted passages. Light and air are admitted through windows barred with delicately-turned stone uprights set close togeher, each upright ringed at near intervals with round mouldings, derived it seems from the bamboo bars of early Cambodian windows.

As you enter each enclosed and vaulted intersection of these long corridors your nostrils are assailed by an acrid odour that is both horribly stale and yet alive and overpowering. It is almost, but not quite, the smell of an unwashed urinal. You finally identify it by a sudden shrill squeak and the slow flapping of webbed wings. You have disturbed a few of the thousands of bats that infest every ruin in Angkor. If anything, this alone could be a measure of how deserted the ruins are, and how near they border to the realm of the primordial.

The smell lingers about you even when you have left the ruins, even when you have left Angkor. For days after, you get a sudden reminiscent whiff of those bats.

You pass out into the open again. Before you lies another long expanse of causeway, terminating in a cruciform terrace which marked the place where the Khmer kings paused to distribute alms and make a final and prayerful gesture of beneficence before entering the hallowed precincts of the temple proper.[1] Facing the terrace is a huge stone platform, and from the centre of this platform the main body of the temple gathers itself to rear upwards into an immense towering mass.

Angkor Vat is geometrical, uncomplex and orderly. It consists of a series of concentred rectangular terraces, the largest being the lowest, the others rising level after level in three diminishing stages to the summit. There is a tower at each angle of the two upper terraces and one in the centre, making nine in all, though only five stand out.

The towers of Angkor Vat have been likened in shape sometimes to pine-cones, sometimes to lotus-buds, sometimes to helmets; the French poet Paul Claudel saw in them nothing but five stone pineapples. There are no spaces for letting in the light so that from within they are but wells of empty blackness. From outside it is seen that they have been built in a series of up to nine diminishing zones, each consisting of distinct flat horizontal mouldings with upright motifs around the outer edge. They are graceful, aspiring, vibrant. The central pinnacle, which soars over 200 feet above the level of the ground, is built directly over the cella which housed the deity.

From the moment you step on to the causeway you are drawn irresistably and inevitably towards this central cella.

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[1] xxii p. 184.

The long vistas are periodically interrupted by the monumental portico, endless stretches of pillared corridors, lofty chambered passages, pools for ceremonial ablutions and the worship of the sacred serpent, galleries containing the stone *apsaras* and standing Vishnus. All these, however, are secondary appurtenances; they can bear inspection later. You walk always in a direct line, as the builders planned you should, always mounting one series after another of high worn steps, rising from terrace to terrace until you reach the last flight, which is a veritable Jacob's Ladder, of thirty-five steps of incredible steepness. Throughout the pilgrimage, from the outer moat to the final flight of this perilous staircase, the eye is ever drawn upward from the rising stories and the mounting towers to the central dome serrated against the sky.

And what wondrous marvel lay within this central cella, beneath the central dome, this *sanctum sanctorum* around which the whole of Angkor Vat was supposed to have been built? Legend relates that it contained an image of Vishnu carved in precious stone. The last Khmer king who struggled in vain against the victorious Thais had himself immured in this chamber, refusing, like Sarakos of Assyria, to fall into the hands of the enemy. The conquerors did not desecrate the sanctuary for fear of divine reprisals, but when the French came they broke down the wall. They found no jewelled idol, no royal skeleton. Only a damp, empty chamber, that still keeps its secret.

Let the apparent simplicity of the design of Angkor Vat deceive no one, for it has few equals in the whole domain of architecture, for harmony, for majesty and for measured movement. It is on an immense scale. But it is more than just that. Its details are wonderfully coordinated and each constituent part harmoniously resolved. Its faults have been pointed out, its technical deficiencies noted. The use of the keystone was unknown—hence, like the Greeks, the Khmers were ignorant of the arch; the Khmer vault was built by laying overlapping stones from adjacent imposts, each stone placed a little further towards the middle than the one beneath; the topmost stone being not a keystone but a covering. Then, they shaped their laterite blocks as though they were beams and boards, never able to shake off the memory of their ancestral huts of log foundations, adobe walls, and terracotta tiles. But, whatever their shortcomings, even its severest critics concede that it takes its place among the architectural masterpieces of the world.

The Bas-reliefs

The galleries of Angkor Vat contain its finest treasures. There are over two miles of these vaulted corridors, and two thousand square yards of their surface are covered with carvings executed in very low relief, which for sensitivity and refinement of æsthetic feeling are worthy to be classed with the finest bas-reliefs of Egypt, Assyria and Greece. Around some of the panels are intricate patterns both floral and geometrical; fantastic lines and arabesques, carved so delicately that one feels a veil of lace has been drawn over the stone; it is tapestry rather than relief on hard rock. Among the bas-reliefs we find scenes from the two great Indian Epics, incidents famous in Hindu myth, and representations from the life and times of His August Majesty King Paramavishnuloka, which was the " glory " name of Suryavarman II who built the temple.

We see Rama and his faithful ally, the monkey general Hanuman, and also the mighty Ravana who abducted Sita. Hanuman's hosts are armed with stones and branches of trees, the allies of the giant Ravana have more " civilised " weapons, swords, spears, clubs and pikes. Ravana himself is represented with ten heads and twenty arms to show his wisdom and his might; his chariot is artistically decorated. It is an old tradition, even in India, that Ravana was a mighty monarch and that his empire knew more luxury, wealth and power than Rama's capital of Ayodhya.

We also see the battle of Kurukshetra, that final sanguinary contest between blood relatives that saw the end of two ancient Indian dynasties. As we approach the storm centre of the fight we find a ghastly slaughter being carried on in a veritable hodge-podge of arms and legs, heads and bodies. Among the Pandavas we see Arjuna, hero of the *Mahabharata,* if the Epic can be said to have a hero, as he stands in his chariot, driven by a four-armed Krishna.

All the chief gods of Hindu mythology are here. Indra on his elephant; Kubera on the shoulders of a *yaksha*; Yama in his bull-drawn chariot; Surya with his celestial halo; Shiva armed with bow and arrow; Brahma on the sacred goose; Varuna on a *naga;* there is a fight between Vishnu shown mounted on Garuda and the demon hosts riding on chariots drawn by monsters; Krishna battling with a demon. We see also vivid scenes from the Last Judgment. The multi-armed god of the dead, Yama, on his bull, deciding the fate of the individual. Not far off are his scribes who like faithful amanuenses take down the dread verdicts he delivers; three *garudas* guard the exits so that none might escape. Hell is a place of excruciating torment and torture, of burnings and beheadings, and castings alive to dogs and vultures. It is to be noted that the pleasures of the blest are not proportionately pleasurable.

One of the finest series of these reliefs shows the Churning of the Ocean, in which the gods and demons participate in a common venture to obtain the elixir of life, using as a pestle the mountain Mandara, as a rope the world-serpent Vasuki, and as a pivot the god Vishnu in his incarnation as Kurma, the tortoise. We see Vishnu both as Kurma and as himself, poised above the tortoise, his face turned to the gods, directing operations. As the churning proceeds the whole sea fills with the denizens of the waters, monstrous fish, crocodiles, giant rays, manatees, and many other lesser inhabitants of the deep in ordered agitation; then graceful female forms emerge, culminating in Lakshmi, goddess of beauty and wealth. Only then does the elixir of life gush forth, which is the whole purpose of all this exertion, divine and demoniacal. The Churning of the Ocean is one of the most puzzling mythical symbolisations produced by the Indian mind. No satisfactory explanation of its significance has yet been given.

Then there are the bas-reliefs depicting the life and times of the Khmers as they lived and moved during the time of Suryavarman II. We see the grand review of the Khmer army by the monarch, the size of his figure indicating his importance, the king being represented larger; it still bears traces of gold; above his head is held the royal umbrella, fifteen tiers high. There is a long procession of warriors on the march, wearing plumed helmets and armed with spears and shields; there are elephants, horses and chariots, and soldiers, among them Thai mercenaries, with bows and arrows and spears. The chief priest is shown being carried in state, others bear a portable altar containing the sacred fire; then a procession of priests wearing top-knots, chanting the sacred verses. There are the royal orchestra, the court jesters, the buffoons; and a bevy of beautiful princesses, graceful as palms, on their way to the forest; a pageant of court ladies on palanquins beautifully ornamented.

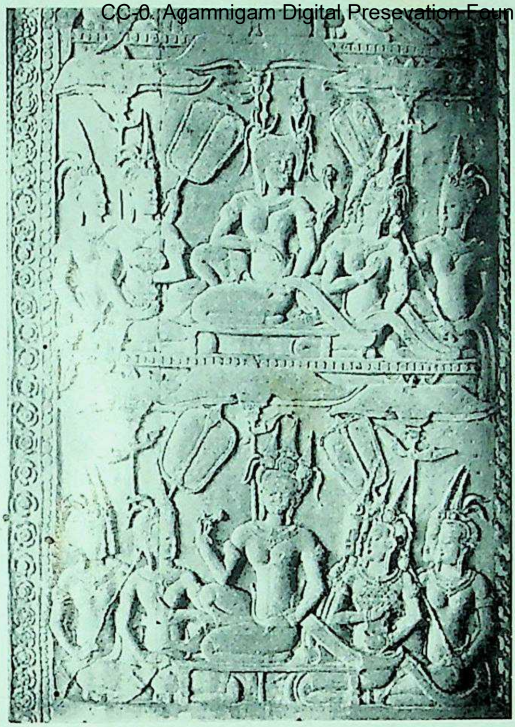
And, of course, there are the *apsaras* or celestial dancers and the *devatas* or female deities, shown in frenzied and fantastic movements, or languorously posed in attitudes of abandoned ease. They are one with all those exquisite carved figures, human and divine, that adorn the pilasters and the walls, from the outer facade to the cloistered court-yards of the temple.

They are imbued with a spirit of restrained joy; in them we see at its best the celebrated Angkor Smile, distant and dreaming, or touched with a warm and sensual femininity. Full of charm, they are shown sometimes standing in languid repose, alluring as heavenly dancers should be; sometimes walking, sometimes dancing, singly or in groups, arms affectionately intertwined, a finger pointing gracefully, the hand holding a flower, or fixed in a conventional dance pose.

Their hair is plaited and rolled up into a neat *chignon* over their heads in the shape of a cone; some have ornate tiaras, others wear great head-dresses of fantastic design, sprouting from their crowns like vegetation. Jewels adorn their ears, necks, wrists, waists, ankles; delicately-carved jewels, they might be the work of goldsmiths, so precise are the smallest details.

They are clothed only from the waist down, in dress of wide variety; a full clinging skirt showing off the contours of the delicately-moulded limbs; many varieties of the *sampot* with borders of lace; or just a slender slip of apron hanging down from the jewelled waistband, the outline of one curved hip fully revealed to view.

Those that are within reach have thousands of hands pass over them yearly. A Buddhist monk who walks ahead of us pauses near a dancer and holds a round breast in his hand a moment, gently squeezes the stone nipple and passes on. A French soldier does likewise. Countless hands which find

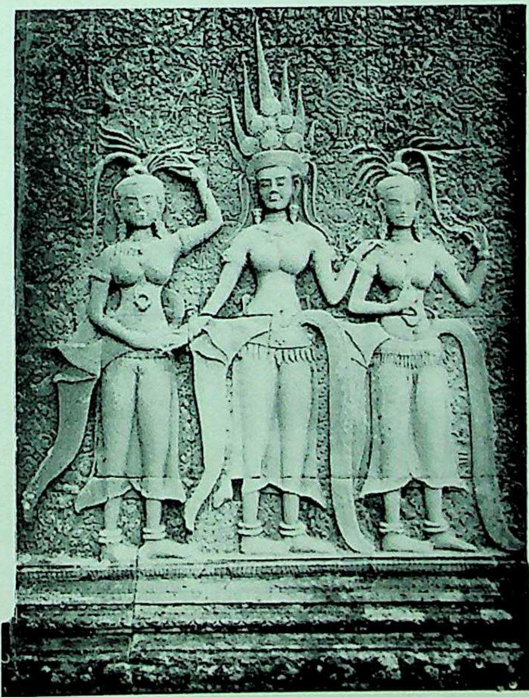


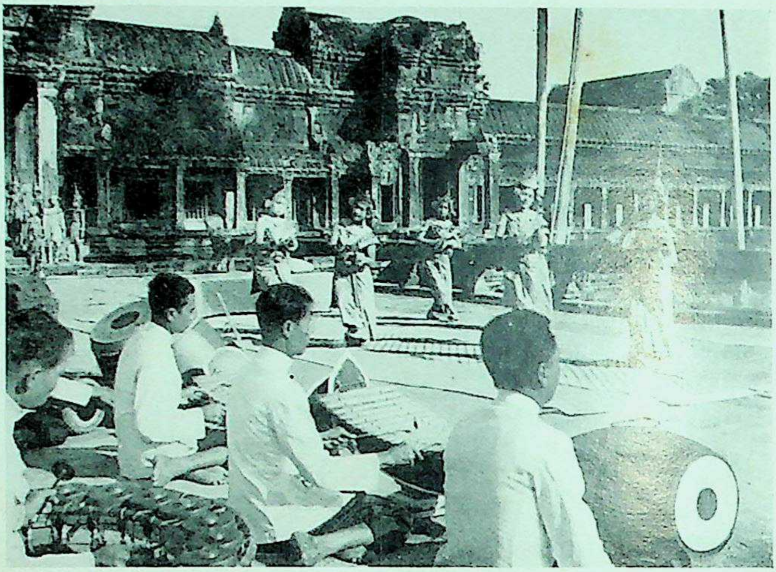
Bas-relief from Angkor Vat showing Khmer princesses with their handmaidens.

(SEE PAGE 51)

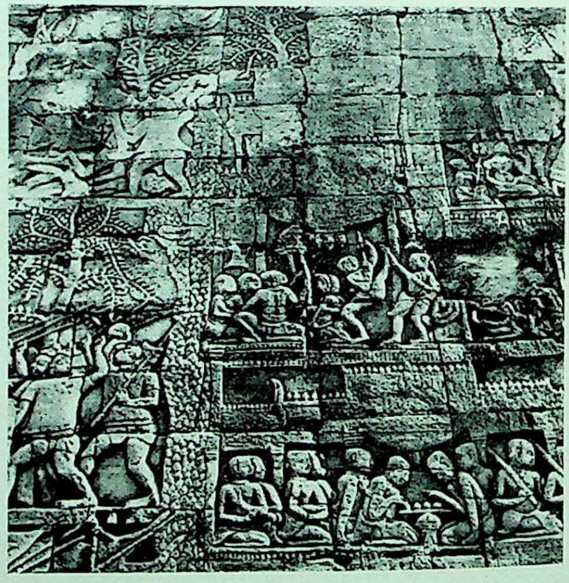
Apsaras — Angkor Vat bas-reliefs. "....great head-dresses of fantastic design, sprouting from their crowns like vegetation."

(SEE PAGE 52)





Cambodian dance in Angkor Vat showing musicians.
(SEE PAGE 53)



Khmer Ballerina—Bayon bas-relief.
(SEE PAGE 57)

the rounded forms irresistible have made the breasts shine like polished bronze.

Notable among the accessories of Angkor Vat are the vaulted buildings that lie in the spacious park. They have been called, on slender evidence, libraries. Chou Ta-kuan speaks of several books written by the scribes of Angkor. Not a scrap of this literature remains. We cannot help but feel that those perished tomes would be able to add little to the vast chronicle of the bas-reliefs that are the chief glory of Angkor Vat.

Cambodian Dance

The transition from the stone dancer to the living dance is one that must be made, if possible against the background of the Khmer ruins. An evening's entertainment was arranged and we saw a dance that everyone assured us was genuine Khmer, but which more reliable authorities tell us is, alas, the modern Cambodian version of the Siamese interpretation of what might have been the Khmer dance. The true Khmer dance is lost forever.[1]

What we see is interesting enough. The orchestra squats in two rows on the ground. It consists of twin drums and a double-headed drum which patter out a syncopated background of highly involved rhythm that soon begins to beat its pattern on the listener's brain; there are bamboo xylophones shaped like little canoes upon which a tiny tinkling cadence of liquid sound is beaten with hammers of wood; there is a circle of bells breaking in upon the music with its own jingle; there is a stringed instrument like the Indian *sitar* pitched to a high plaintive key, and a flute which drones out a slow monotony of serpentining notes.

The sounds do not blend. There is no unified merging of notes; there are no chords; only a succession of musical sounds, entirely linear and without harmony. Like Chinese music, and Siamese, from which it has recently borrowed much, Cambodian music uses the pentatonic scale. It is fragile, primitive, nostalgic. It is not loud music; it is not shrill. Heard in the evening quiet amid the ruins it has a weird appeal and gives hint of the mystery of Angkor, evocative and pathetic, like the echo of a cry heard in a wilderness.

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[1] xxiv p. 136.

The dance itself is slow-moving and graceful. It does not feature any acrobatic leaps nor does the eye have to follow swift movements. The gestures are stylised, hieratic and intricate. To those who do not know the ritual cipher many symbols must remain meaningless. But there is a strange beauty in the complex pattern of each languorous movement. It is an enchanting, ethereal thing. Something eerie about it too. Remote and reminiscent of some prehistoric ritual of sorcery. The sudden set of the cryptic pose, head oddly poised, fingers bent incredibly back, knees flexed, legs apart . . . and then the slow-moving readjustment to another fixed pose. It is a surrealistic dream made flesh, to which the drone and tinkle of the orchestra form a fitting incantation, unearthing memories of what might be our buried life.

The dancer pauses, immovably balanced on feet that seem oddly placed, head set as though listening. Then with a sudden twitch begins a gentle undulation of shoulders and arms and fingers in leisurely and rhythmic motion, graceful, plastic, like the *naga* come alive or the swaying branches of the palms that gently stir above our heads. The bracelets jangle faintly. The face remains motionless. Writes Brodrick, " It seems that the Cambodians are moved to a deep insurgent eroticism by the slow movements of the dance." He also adds, for the greater glory of the world of pink people, "To us Westerners the whole dance may appear rather chaste."[1]

The modern Cambodian dance-drama is only superficially derived from the ancient rituals. At present Cambodian folk-lore and only rarely episodes from the epics provide the story around which the drama is woven. The stories are as old as hoary legends recited at the dawn of history, and as new as today's romance. Here is one. We see a lovely princess, surrounded by a bevy of slender handmaidens. The Prince enters, and romance is in full bloom. But not without a struggle are man and maid to be united, for on the stage there now appears an ominous figure who sends a chill through the audience. We are not favoured with this particular ballet. Let Helen Candee who has seen it describe her impressions:

"There is a hush as the Giant advances. He comes slowly, with measured step, but elastic, a malignant presence, puissant, magnetic. He throws his head quickly as though looking where to strike. He moves in flashes, with cruelty present in every nervous movement. He stands a moment with knees bent outward, and heels off the ground, and defies the world—evil made flesh yet beautiful as a god.

"At a lovely moment when the Prince is claiming his Princess, the evil one sees her. Thrills of cruel joy pass over his body. He is animated with spasms of wicked triumph and his muscles stiffen as by repeated electric shocks. With no word spoken, with no aids of the theatre, this lone dancer in the jungle strikes deep into human emotions. He thrusts forward an agile arm and seizes her, possesses her.

"He thrills with the triumph of it and with the humiliation of the Prince. From that moment he dances with increased inspiration. Holding the captive lady with one hand he places his steeled body between her and her lover, and in a series of thrusts and parryings defends his stolen quarry. Almost the audience can see blue flames around the magnetic figure. For long he is victor while a huddling crowd of lesser princes and princesses look on confounded.

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[1] xxiv p. 22.

" But we know the Prince is bound to win. After prolonged attacks he draws from the King of the Giants his tender prey. The Giant is vanquished, yes, but he scorns his failure until it appears as a triumph. Pride and insolence animate his step and bearing. Thus holding himself he first dominates the audience, then passes proudly out of sight."[1]

Those who have made this dancing famous are the little Cambodian girls. Starting her training in the severe discipline of the royal ballet before she is eight years old, under a martinet matron whose ideal is perfection, the modern Cambodian dancing-girl is a full-fledged " professional " before she has passed her teens. But her perfection is only partly due to her training, for she has been conditioned for her task by a tradition that is old in the land of the Khmers, and she is upheld by the pride of her profession. To her has been bequeathed from earliest times that serious and classic poise that the Western ballerina acquires only rarely and after prolonged effort. Something in the blood transfigures a common village girl with no perceptible background into a divine dancer, elegant, grave and graceful, with gestures so easy and effortless that a queen might envy her.

The dress and make-up of the dancers is often quite elaborate. The face is whitened with a thin paste of rice-powder; the lips heavily pigmented with red; the eyes enlarged with *kohl*. A wide decorative collar is worn, and elongated nail-sheaths, and a load of jewelled accessories, bracelets, waist-band, necklace, ear-rings, anklets, and the great pointed

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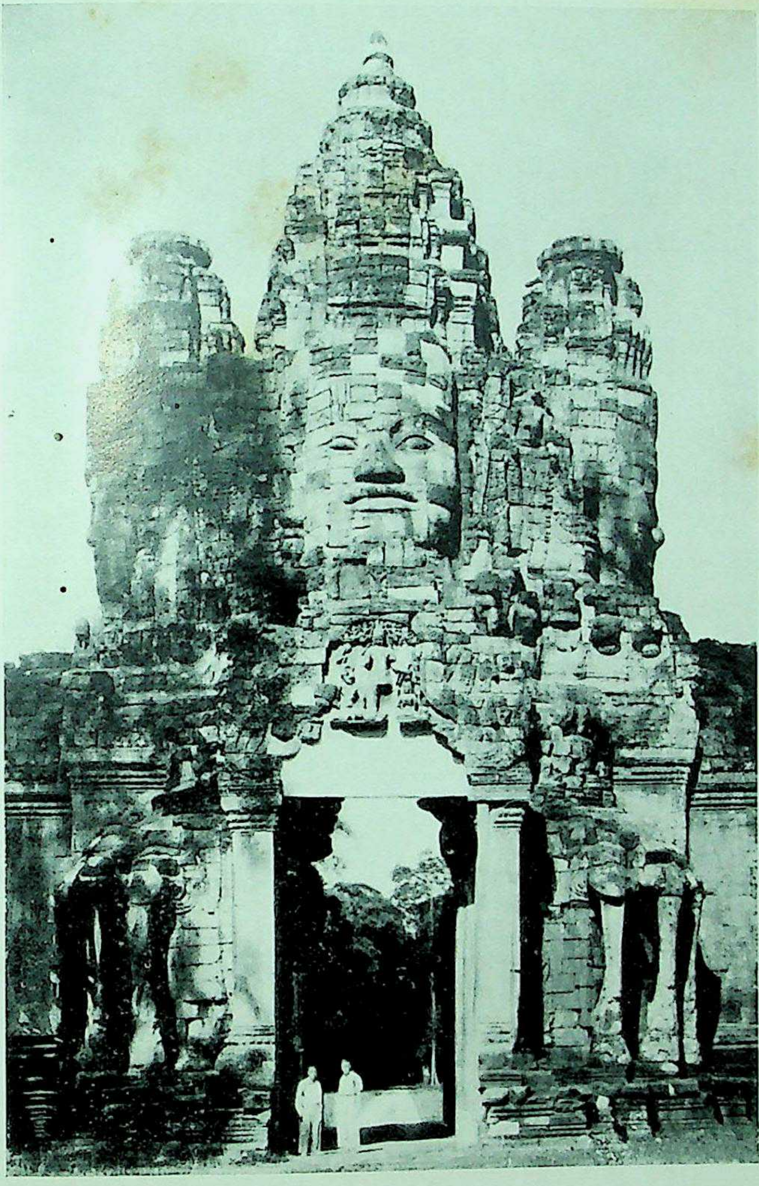
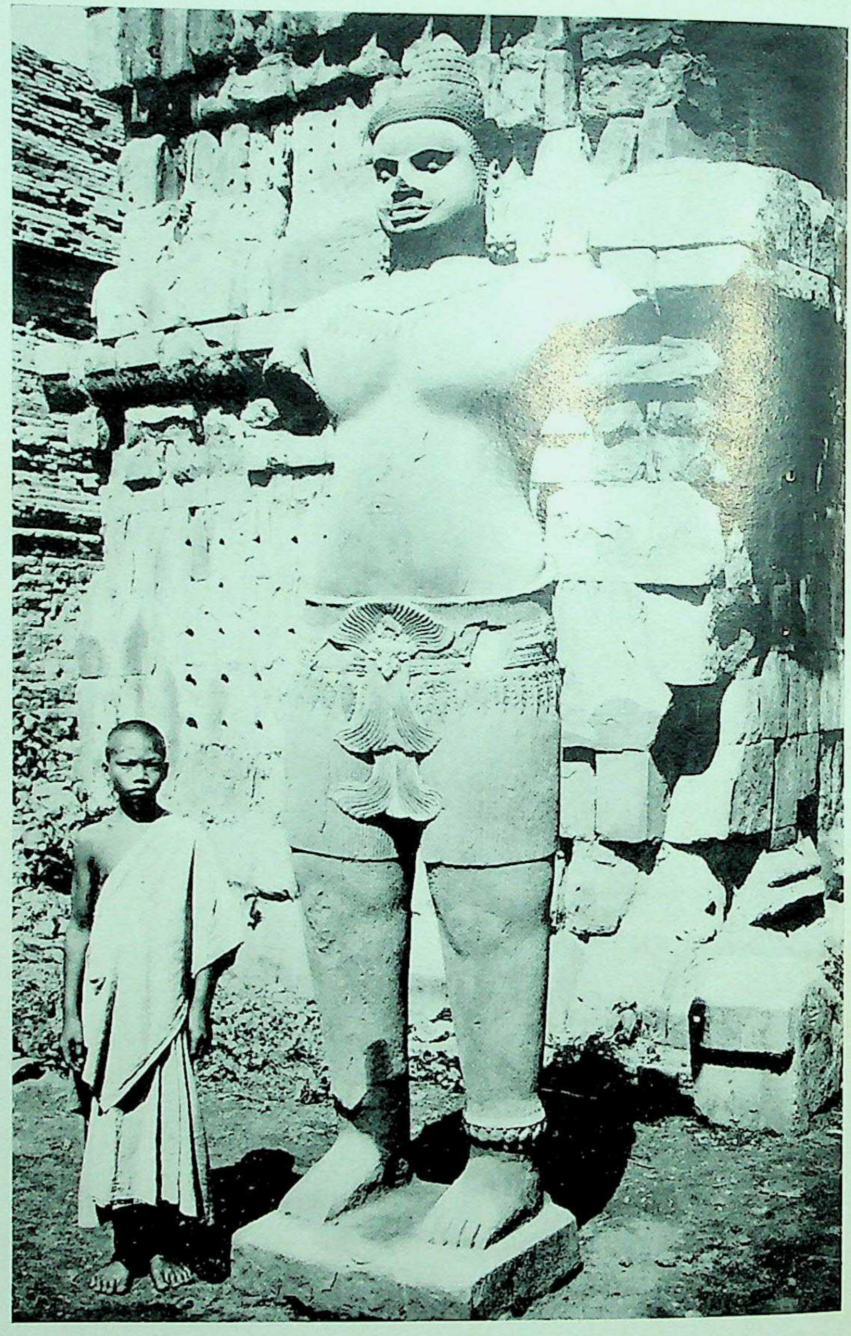
[1] xxvi p. 118.



Gate of Victory—Angkor Thom. (SEE PAGE 68)



Dvarapala. This fanged ogre guards the gateway of Phnom Krom.

crown, the *mkot*. Sometimes the dancer carries as much as six to seven pounds of metal and gems, often real gold, and pearls and sapphires. It is noteworthy that many accessory ornaments worn by the Cambodian dancing-girl today are imitations from Portuguese models![1]

And then there is a *sampot* of lustrous silk which hangs from the waist. The upper part of the body is modestly covered with a light embroidered blouse. It is tightly drawn, and flattens the bosom, leaving no suggestion of those shapely contours that form the most attractive feature of their stone counterparts of Angkor and its environs. For more elaborate ceremonies the dancers are sewn into their shimmering robes some hours before the dance commences. Dressing up the Cambodian ballerina is a long and tedious process.

The bas-reliefs at Angkor Thom portray scenes from the dance ritual and life of the Khmer ballerinas, their make-up, their dress, their baths and exercise. There is one nude dancing-girl shown performing a sort of *grand battement*, her leg raised high, assisted by the supporting hand of her male instructor. Even the old Khmers required limbering up!

The Siamese, who copied many things from the Khmers, took over what they could of their dance ritual too. The ancient Khmer dance disappeared almost four centuries ago and was re-introduced only by the Siamese, with Siamese chorus, Siamese postures and Siamese dancing-girls. What is called Cambodian dancing is so strongly infused with Siamese influences that it belongs to a new hybrid category taking important elements both from the Thais and from old remembered Cambodian folk dances.

It is to King Sisowath that modern Cambodia owes its realignment to the past. This reversion was based on what could be learnt from the bas-reliefs, and what could be used from the deciphered stelæ. Many ornaments worn by the dancers are found in the Khmer bas-reliefs, some postures are duplicates of the Bayon carvings; the elaborate ceremonial *mkot* though taken from Siam was originally Khmer and replicas of this head-dress are frequently carved on Angkor walls. The renascent monarchy assembled from the stone illustrations as much as it could to give the Cambodian dance-drama an authentic relationship to the traditional past.

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[1] xxiv p. 20.

The Siamese appropriated an immense quantity of cultural material from the Khmers, faithfully copied many of their ancient ceremonials and points of court procedure, and modelled their elaborate hierarchy of officialdom on that of the Khmer state.[1] One thing however the Siamese did not take over: the near-nudity and bare bosoms of the Khmer ballerinas. This was due both to Hinayana Buddhism as well as to Chinese influence, for the prudish Chinese frown upon the baring of the female breasts to the public gaze. The modern Cambodian dance has been infected with this prudery. The dancers are all clothed with due regard for the proprieties.

The search for the modern counterpart of the stone *apsara* is a commoner pursuit in Siem Reap and Angkor than the travel books disclose. Those exposed limbs, so delicate and alluring, those rounded forms, divinely moulded: if only one could find their replicas today! We tell the sculptor in the words of the poet who preferred the living present to the inanimate past,

> " *And that's your Venus, whence we turn*
> *To yonder girl that fords the born.*"

But, alas, we soon discover that it is not only the dancers who are vitiated by the modern fashion of modesty. Today in Angkor and Siem Reap we look about us in vain for the sight of a Cambodian female not properly clothed from neck to knee. We console ourselves with the thought that perhaps we shall find one a little off the beaten track. Siem Reap, though merely a village, is in a way quite as cosmopolitan as Saigon, for there is a small but steady stream of visitors from all parts of the globe, just as keen as we are for contrasting pictures of women, past and present. Tourists anywhere will vulgarise the remotest village, and there are perhaps others like us who have helped to bring Siem Reap to the level of a peep-show.

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[1] cvii p. 4, p. 176.

"Of medium height, well-shaped, in the flower of their youth, and admirable to contemplate, you cannot look upon them without love." So rhapsodises an old text about the women of the land.[1] If a slight tendency to stubbiness does not detract from shapeliness, the Cambodian woman is well-shaped still, and a change from the weedy Annamite. Indeed Osbert Sitwell thinks the Cambodian the most beautiful race he has seen.[2]

The Cambodian girl moves about freely, smiles easily; returns your gaze without that immodest fluttering and lowering of the eyelids that used to be the stock-in-trade of the man-made woman of virtue, East and West.

Her dress is the sampot. Authorities say it is from Siam.[3] Why, no one can guess. Authorities tell us all sorts of curious things on the strength of their knowledge of the ancient texts and the historians' histories. It requires no knowledge of mediaeval Siamese history to see plentiful evidence of the *sampot* in the bas-reliefs, which preceded Siamese influences by centuries. The *sampot* is like the Indian *lungi* or the Malayan *sarong;* a length of cloth, often gaily coloured, tied around the waist and hanging down like a skirt. Sometimes it is caught up between the legs and fixed behind like a *dhoti*, in the fashion of the women of Maharashtra. Both men and women wear the same dress; both wear it either like a skirt or secured between the buttocks; both crop their hair short and comb it back. From a distance it is often not so easy to distinguish man from woman, except for the plump gluteal shape of the female.

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[1] xxiv p. 19. [2] xcix p. 30. [3] xxiv p. 158.

But there is still no evidence of a display of bosom, such as one sees in some parts of India. It is all very nice and prim and puritanical. And for once this transformation to decorum is not due to the influence of Christian missionaries. It is Hinayana Buddhism that has imposed this restriction.

We stroll down the banks of the Siem Reap river one warm evening. Tall palms whose graceful fronds wave gently in the breeze; heavy bushes growing wildly on the sloping banks; big water-wheels turning lazily. We pause a moment to watch these ingenious water-lifting contraptions: little sections of hollowed bamboo are attached to the rim of the wheel, and as it turns the bamboo sections scoop up their fill of water and then empty them into a long wooden trough on the bank. We pass a cluster of pile houses built upon stilts, reminiscent of Indonesia or the South Seas, and primitive humped bridges like a scene from a Japanese print .... a little Chinese pagoda .... rice mills with shafts rotated by the gentle current of the river .... groups of people bathing in the stream .... boys and men .... and women.

The Cambodian woman is dextrous in changing her wet clothes in public. She will emerge from the water, wet *sampot* clinging to her body, stretch out a graceful brown hand, pick up a fresh *sampot* from the bank, drape it around her, holding the ends in her teeth, expertly remove the wet dress, using the dry one as a screen. It is over in a few seconds.

It is a warm, lazy evening. We continue our walk. There is a sudden sound of laughter. We look up. Seated on a projecting ledge of rock are two Cambodian girls. They see us and make no attempt at concealment. Here they are at last; naked to the waist, *a la* Bali, and shamelessly sitting in the evening sunlight, proud of their youthful forms, two splendid specimens of Cambodian loveliness, like the stone *apsaras* come to life.

" Women of the village, in groups of three or more, go to bathe in the river. Arriving at the bank they undress and enter the water. Even the noble women do likewise without shame. They can be seen from head to foot." So writes the scandalised Chinese Chou Ta-kuan, describing them at the end of the 13th century, adding, " When they have leisure the Chinese entertain themselves by going there to see."

The drift of centuries and a change of race can hardly alter what must obviously be a common failing of the human male.

Jayavarman VII

The monarch who comes nearest to possessing the qualities that are commonly associated with Rameses II of Egypt, Asoka the Great, Caliph Haroun al-Rashid and Louis XIV, was the Khmer Jayavarman VII (1182-1201). He was a devout Buddhist and a man of peace and had renounced the throne in favour of his nephew, retiring to Champa to live a life of solitude and meditation. During this period the Khmer empire suffered its most serious vicissitudes. There were two revolts against the reigning sovereign: the first, the revolt of the lower class Rahus was overcome, the second resulted in the death of the king and the crowning of an usurper.

In 1177 the ferocious Chams raided the outposts of the kingdom and pillaged the countryside. They then sailed up the Tonle Sap to Yasodharapura and burned the public residences and many temples, destroyed the stone sanctuaries and put the usurping king to death. It was the greatest disaster the Khmers suffered since the attacks from Malaya.

There was a period of anarchy for five years until Jayavarman, then fifty one years old, decided to return to the kingdom to restore order and save the country.

His first task on ascending the throne was to avenge the terrible deed of his vandal enemies who had destroyed the ancient capital of Yasovarman I. He raised a large army and went forth to punish the Chams. He waged a relentless war against them and suffered many reverses, but at last captured the king and placed on the throne of Champa a prince of the Kambujan line.

His was the greatest extent of the Khmer empire, covering the whole eastern coast of Indochina as far north as Hue, the area on both sides of the Mekong as far north as Vientiane, the central Siamese plain and the northern part of the Malayan peninsula. No kingdom in the history of Indochina has ever covered such an extent of territory.

Having humbled his enemies, Jayavarman VII returned to Angkor to rebuild the city, employing the labour of about a third of a million men and the revenue of 13,500 villages, for a period of ten years.[1]

Whatever he did henceforth was inspired by devotion to Buddhism. He made the centre of his new metropolis, not the Brahmanical Phnom Bakheng, but the new Buddhist temple of Bayon which he constructed. With this as the focal point he set out upon a career of construction that is without parallel in history. Admittedly many buildings attributed to him were in fact reconstructed shrines raised by his predecessors, but even so he remains one of the greatest builders of all time. "He accomplished things in building," says Sitwell, "of which no man before or since has ever dreamed."[1]

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[1] lxxiii p. 225.

Like a devoted follower of the Blessed One, he built over one hundred hospitals, which were served by physicians, assistants and nurses, both male and female, to care for the ill and the aged. Nor were the ailments of the sedentary monks overlooked, for among the medical provisions we find listed two thousand boxes containing a remedy for piles.[2] He set up the first *salas* or rest-houses for pilgrims, more than one hundred and twenty of them; he constructed a series of highways and bridges. And finally, he built temples without number: the Bayon, the magnificent Terraces of the Royal Palace, Banteay Kdei, east of which he sank the basin of the beautiful artificial lake called Srah Srang; also his work were Ta Prohm, Prah Khan of Angkor, Banteay Prei, Ta Nei, Suor Prat, Vat N'okor, Krol Ko, Ta Prom Kei, Neak Pean, Ta Som . . . .

What might sound like mere names out of a Miltonic stanza are most of them magnificent edifices that could vie with the mightiest structures ever raised by man.

Some distance outside this complex of temples that he built around Bayon, within and without Angkor Thom, is the temple of Banteay Chhmar (Narrow Fortress), eighty miles north-west of Angkor in the region of Sisophon and forty miles from that town. Some authorities think that it was the funerary temple of Jayavarman VII whose ashes rested under the dome of the central sanctuary.[3] It is so far from the Khmer centre that it appears to have been forgotten by the Cambodians themselves. A wide area for miles around the temple shows evidence of an extensive and derelict metropolis.

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[1] xcix p. 94. [2] i p. 333. [3] xxii p. 227.

It is the most inaccessible and the most ruined of all the larger Khmer sanctuaries. The temple has fifty towers and its bas-reliefs, exquisitely carved, are among the finest specimens of Khmer art. The French savant, George Groslier, calculated that if 44,000 workmen laboured for 10 hours a day they would have taken more than 8 years to complete the temple; after this was done, and since all the carving was executed after the walls were erected, it would have taken 1,000 sculptors more than 20 years to complete the decoration. In regard to mass Banteay Chhmar is the largest temple in the world.[1]

Slave-labour

An ancient Chinese record referring to the Funanese says, "They take by force the inhabitants of the neighbouring cities who do not render them homage, and make them slaves,"[2] and some form of this system apparently prevailed during the imperial Khmer period, for the erection of the enormous temples presupposes the existence of a vast and well-organised slave-system.

The stone for the construction of Angkor was quarried in the Kulen hills, thirty miles away. From there it was transported in blocks to the building sites by road and river and erected under the supervision of the master-masons. These operations were maintained for centuries and suggest an immense organisation, and the efficient management of large resources of man-power.

Though this evidence is incontestable, it would be wrong to conclude from it that the system was analogous to the rigorous exploitation of slaves practiced by the Egyptians, or that it had the dreadful character of Assyrian slavery that made the armies of Ashur the terror of the ancient world.

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[1] xxii p. 204. [2] xxii p. 29.

The Khmers knew of Kartikeya, the Hindu war-god, but this deity did not have anything like the importance of the Aztec and Inca gods of war. The Khmers took prisoners of war and imposed corvees on the inhabitants of the villages, but it was an order of slavery different from the sanguinary system that prevailed in Mesopotamia and Egypt. The vision of thousands of prisoner-slaves forced by the relentless lash to toil through the Cambodian summer to erect the great temples of the Imperial Khmers is not in keeping with the evidence we have.

From inscriptions we learn that there were hereditary slaves attached to the temples, and domestic slaves who belonged to their masters: rich houses had at least a hundred of them, mostly aborigines, like the Lolo and Moi from the mountains. Though they could be dealt with arbitrarily they were as a rule well treated. It was a system more like that of ancient Rome, or mediaeval India rather than that of the pyramid-builders. There is no doubt that this feudal system caused much discontent among the people and forced them to neglect their fields, and that this contributed to the weakness of the later Khmers, led to an uprising of slaves and accelerated the downfall of the empire. But it was, nonetheless, a system under a comparatively benign dispensation. " For superstitious if for no other reasons," Norman Lewis reminds us, " the peoples of Indochina always trod very gently when it came to oppression of others. The spirits of their ancestors had to be reckoned with."[1]

The Khmers built hospitals for their sick and *salas* for their pilgrims, and they looked after the welfare of the aged and infirm. The villages attached to a hospital could be punished for only one crime—the infliction of suffering on living creatures.[2] All this does not mate happily with the notion that they ruthlessly employed an army of slaves, subjected them to torture and mutilation and cared not a whit for their welfare: nothing in the Khmer chronicles justifies this conclusion and it is time that historians abandoned it.

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[1] lxxiii p. 287. [2] xxii p. 233.

Handicrafts

There must have been a considerable number of artisans, wood-carvers, inlay-workers, jewellers, metal-workers, weavers and other miscellaneous craftsmen in the Khmer country. In Cambodia till recently the arts were all but extinct. A few artisans survived in the villages, but even among them the old traditions were fast vanishing. There was no market for their handiwork among the Cambodians, and the Siamese court had ceased to extend their patronage after their influence over Kambuja began to wane. Only stray foreigners and curious tourists bought their work. It was due to the labours of the Frenchman, George Groslier, that the old crafts were revived. As director of the Albert Sarraut Museum in Phnom Penh and head of the Service of Cambodian Arts he helped in the formation of old craftsmen's guilds and fostered the ancient arts, established the old traditions and techniques again, giving workers pride in their handiwork and reasonable remuneration for their labour. The market for their products was widened, and there is at present a growing demand for Cambodian wood-work, silverware and silks.

Today Cambodian silks are among the finest in the East. There are magnificent specimens in the Museum, but the sumptuous fabrics can be seen to best advantage only when as *sampot* or bodice they are worn by the Cambodian lady on ceremonial occasions. Then we can truly appreciate the excellence of the merging colours, the shimmering irridescence of the silver-blue, the pale-gold and the voluptuous shades, emerald and old-rose merging and melting one into the other in a rich symphony of coloured magnificence.

Angkor Thom

The capital of Jayavarman VII was a vast and moated metropolis almost eight miles around, with its high walls pierced by five majestic gates. It was built near the region made sacrosanct by the older site of Yasodharapura. Its name was Nagara Dham, or Great City, corrupted now to Angkor Thom. In its heyday a million inhabitants lived within its walls, soldiers and slaves, merchants, priests and palace attendants, artists and astronomers, the latter including women, foretellers of the future and prognosticators of eclipses, labourers and sea-captains, fisherfolk and ravishing princesses, all contributing to the matchless pageantry of the imperial city of the Khmers. A kingdom so magnificent its fame spread from Khotan to China, while in wealth and power it ranked with Ormuz and Golkonda.

Marco Polo on his return from the capital of the Great Cham, Kublai Khan, paused to visit Angkor in 1291.[1] Five years later the Mongol emperor Timur Khan (or Yuen-Cheng) grandson and successor of Kublai and founder of the Yuan dynasty, who now ruled over the destinies of the people of Han, sent to this Khmer capital an embassy which arrived in 1295 after a long odyssey by junk and sampan. A Chinese scholar, Chou Ta-kuan, was attached to this embassy, and he stayed till 1297 and recorded the chronicle of the Khmer people. His observation was keen, and except for an occasional patriotic lapse, as when he claims that Angkor Vat was the tomb of Lou Pan, a contemporary of Confucius and a patron saint of Chinese carpenters, his record is reliable.[2] It reads like the story of another world, of golden palaces, and jewelled kings, of beautiful women, and a vast panorama of glory and magnificence unrivalled.

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[1] xxiv p. 156. [2] xcix -p. 105.

The Terraces

In the centre of Angkor Thom is the Bayon, and north of the Bayon lies the great *veal* or plaza which served as the Khmer Public Square. East of the square lie the twelve beautiful towers of red laterite whose function is unknown: they are the Prasats Suor Prat, or the Towers of the Rope Dancers, and were thought to provide the pinnacles to which the ropes of the troupe of Royal Acrobats were attached. Others hold the view that they were used by high officials for witnessing the games and other functions that took place in the square. Chou Ta-kuan says that they housed the litigants of any trial whose outcome was left to "celestial judgment." The opposing parties were placed in opposite towers, and in a few days the guilty one would develop ulcers, rash, carbuncles, catarrah, fever. . . .[1]

In the Public Square were to be seen the parade and pageantry that formed so important a part in the Khmer scheme of life. The king reviewed his troops and witnessed the processions from a point of vantage on the beautiful terraces that aligned the eastern face of his palace. Seated here he watched the cavalcade of his conquering generals as they passed down the avenue from the Gate of Victory.

The Terraces, which were the termini of a long avenue leading from the eastern wall of the city, are composed of a platform about fifteen feet high running northwards and fronting the Baphuon and the Phimeanakas, for a length of over one thousand feet, broken by five stairways.

A *naga* balustrade tops the edge of the terraces and heroic friezes in medium relief decorate the outer walls. They

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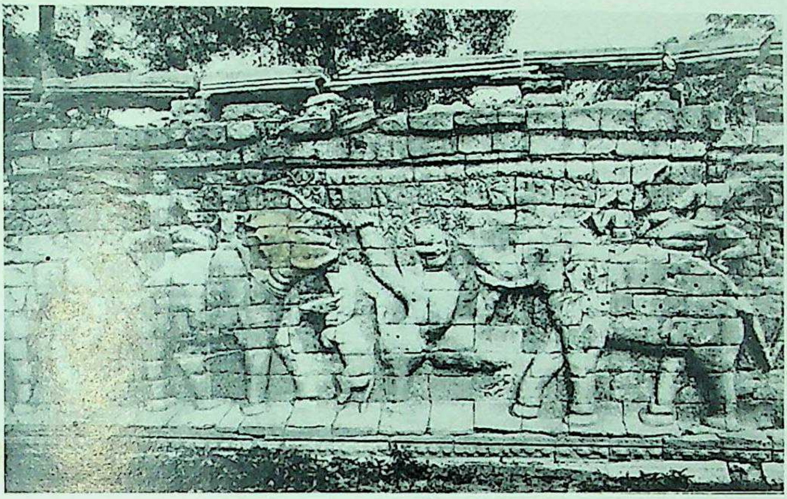
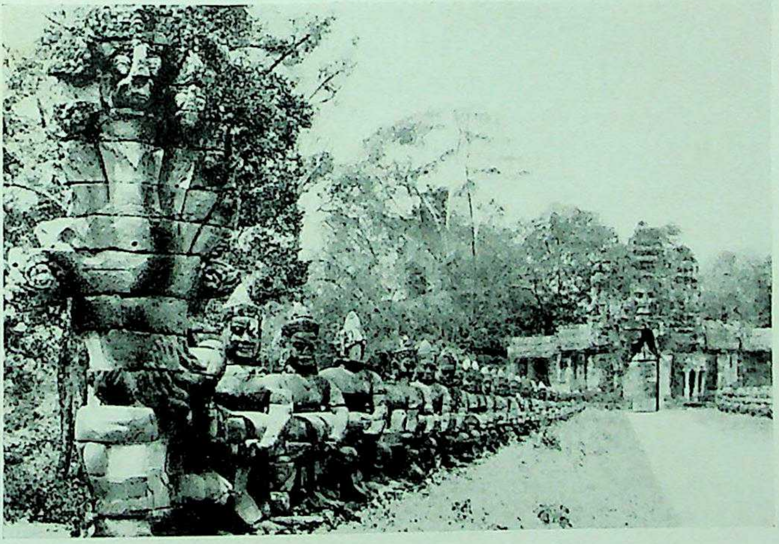
[1] xxii p. 158.



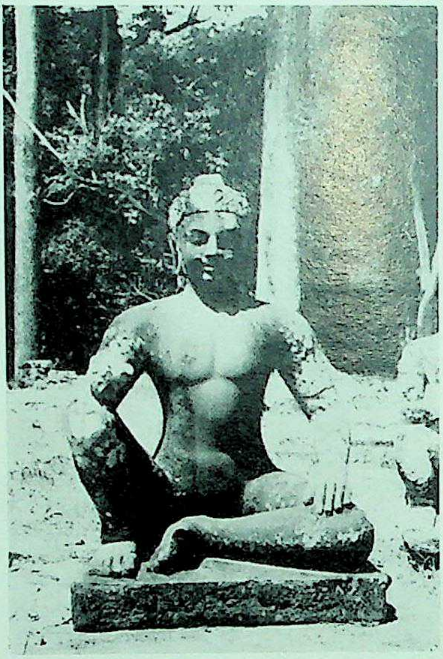
The Elephant Terrace—Angkor Thom.

(SEE PAGE 69)



Angkor Thom—gateway showing demons holding up the Naga.

(SEE PAGE 70)



The Leper King.

(SEE PAGE 70)

consist of life-size elephants shown at an elephant hunt (the Elephant Terrace); of a row of powerful *garudas*, winged arms uplifted to support the coping, like exotic atlantes; they probably upheld the superstructure of the palace which, like the Cambodian palaces of the present day, was made of wood and has now completely disappeared. It was upon this Terrace of Honour that the monarch received the guests of state and foreign ambassadors as they ascended the stairway to present their homage to the king. Here Chou Ta-kuan was granted an audience by the Khmer monarch Srindravarman, whom he saw framed within a golden window, richly curtained. Slender hand-maidens gently raised the embroidered fabric, the emissary from Timur Khan beheld the monarch . . . . the curtains fell.

Stone Animals

The recurrent decorative theme of the Angkor sanctuaries is zoomorphic. There is *garuda,* the gryphon, vehicle of Vishnu, beaked and spread-eagled, gripping the pediments with cruel and determined talons. There is Hanuman in a hundred poses: a *dvarapala* or guardian in Banteay Srei, a mighty warrior, battling with the evil hosts of Ravana in Angkor Vat; bringing to the decimated champions the life-restoring herb, hill and all; building the bridge over to Lanka. There is the lion, Sinha, as a sentinel, guarding the sacred gateways, plump, erect and canine, rampant and vigilant and never relaxed.

And, of course, there is the *naga;* the ubiquitous world-serpent which moves its slow length through Hindu mythology, religion and metaphysics. You meet the snake in the Epics and the Buddha story, in local legends and popular tales, as well as in esoteric symbolism. The highest astral-spiritual centre in man is symbolised by the coiled serpent, *Kundalini* which sleeps at the base of the spine, its tail in its mouth. In Khmer art the *naga* assumes a position of major importance. It raises its five, seven, or nine-headed hood at the terminals of the balustrades, temple approaches and gateways; it figures in the bas-reliefs of Angkor and Bayon. The entwined, mating bodies of two immense serpents give the name to the magnificent little temple of Neak Pean. The gates leading to Angkor Thom and Prah Khan are approached by an avenue flanked by two rows of fifty-four giants and demons, holding up the body of the world serpent with which they churn the sea of milk to obtain the nectar of immortality. You are greeted with the great fan-heads of the *nagas* thus upreared.

Then there is the elephant: as Ganesh, offspring of Shiva and Parvati, god of good luck and wisdom; or as the mount of kings and deities; or, singly and in groups with crowned heads, helping to uplift a wall, each powerful trunk a column; or as a noble figure dominating the battlefield or the royal chase, as in the heroic life-size relief on the Elephant Terrace.

The Leper King

The platform is continued as the Terrace of the Leper King, named after the mysterious figure of a nude male who squats upon it, facing the square that stretches out before him till it reaches the " Gate of Death ".

Much speculative ingenuity has been exercised upon the significance of this lonesome figure. Some authorities think he is King Yasovarman I, founder of Angkor and builder of Phnom Bakheng and other early masterpieces, who is said to have died a leper. Speaking of lepers Chou Ta-kuan says, " Many lepers take up their position on the roads, but though they live and eat with them people do not catch the illness.

They say it is a disease they are accustomed to in the country. Once a king caught it, and he was not scorned for it." Others think that it is Kubera, the god of wealth, who was also a leper.[1] But the figure shows no symptoms of the dread disease. A few hold that it is Shiva as Mahayogi, the Great Ascetic, but again, we find no signs of emaciation, no sunken abdomen, no shrunken cheeks, no protruding ribs. Still others, finding some slender evidence in an inscription on the plinth, say he is Yama, god of the underworld, symbolically placed here to preside over the royal crematory located on the Terrace,[2] and perceive in his upturned moustaches a pair of demoniacal fangs.

Whatever his identity we cannot tell whether he was a leper. His present aspect need not deceive one, for the marks on his limbs and head are lichen, not leprosy.

He has a smile that is nearly Bayonic, and in the Khmer tradition, as though moved to smile by some inward understanding. It is an attractive figure, slightly larger than lifesize. One full hand rests on a lowered knee. You walk over and look into the crook of his thighs. There is no evidence of male gentilia. He is shorn like a gelding.

But that is only Khmer modesty, for the Khmers rarely depicted the nude male. When they did, they did not resort to the fig-leaf; they simply took care to divest him of all the significant appurtenances of sexuality. But there is no doubt about his gender, for the king has a fine pair of upturned moustaches, and his smile, esoteric though it may be, is suggestive of a healthy masculinity and his expression is full of mischief.

The archaeologist Jean Commaille held that the statue does not belong to the belvedere and that the Cambodians placed it there before the French occupation.[3] It is an unsentimental hypothesis, for beneath the platform where the king squats we discover the most astonishing concourse of sculptured princesses in all Angkor. And what could be more appropriate, the sturdy male.... the lovely females.

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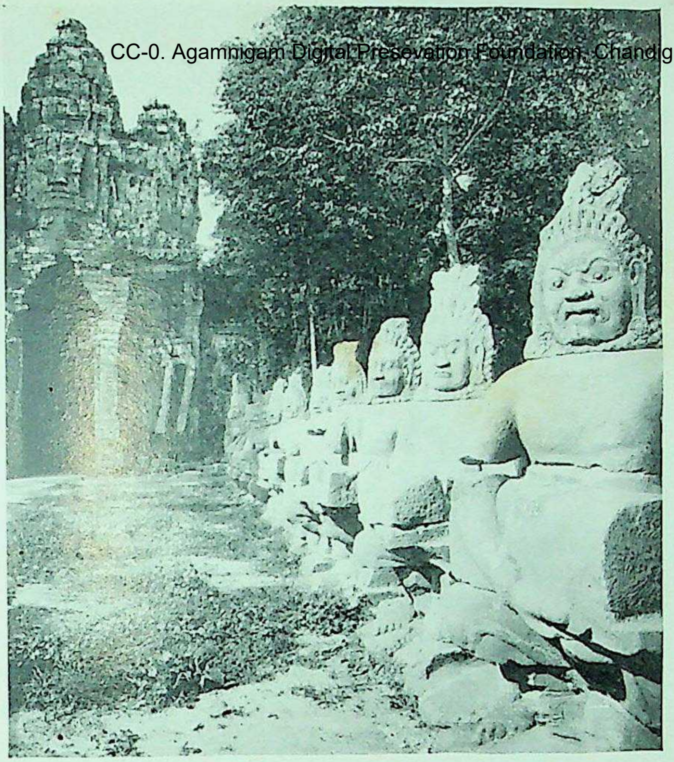
[1] xxii p. 232. [2] xxii p. 232. [3] xxvi p. 177.

Chou Ta-kuan gives us his opinion of the cause of leprosy: it is due either to too much bathing or to "an excess of love-making." The stone harem might confirm the view of those who hold that the statue is that of a leper king.

One might easily miss the sculptured seraglio for there is a false outer wall concealing it. Between outer and inner wall is a narrow passage, little more than two feet wide. You enter this one-track maze and are in a world of your own, incarcerated within two long walls that turn and turn abruptly, and the blue serene.

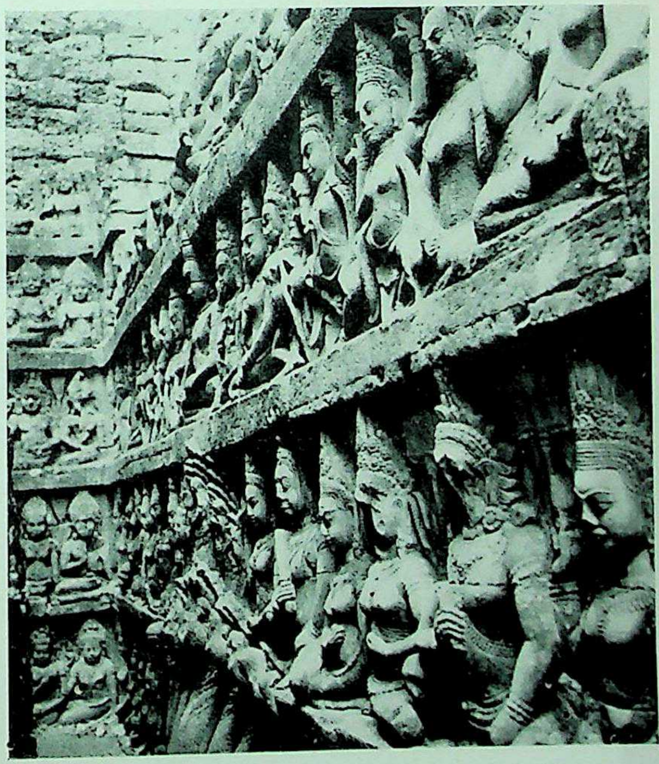
With only an occasional man among them, we find a group of handsome females carved in high relief on the interior walls, seated in serried ranks in four rows one above the other, a veritable congregation of loveliness, crowned, bejewelled and smiling. A bevy of Khmer beauties at their best.

No one knows why an outer wall was built to conceal this inner frieze of ravishing girls. And why earth was piled into the space between the two walls, burying queens and concubines, courtiers and kings in the rank tropic soil. One explanation occurs. Could it be that when the Khmers knew the end was approaching, they concealed from their vandal enemies this princess gallery, deceiving them with a false wall that contained no outer frieze and yet formed a deceptive facade to the terrace? For, though later hands have chipped off many wonderfully modelled noses and chins, and left several ugly indentations on the fair faces, these exquisite figures are among the best preserved in Angkor.



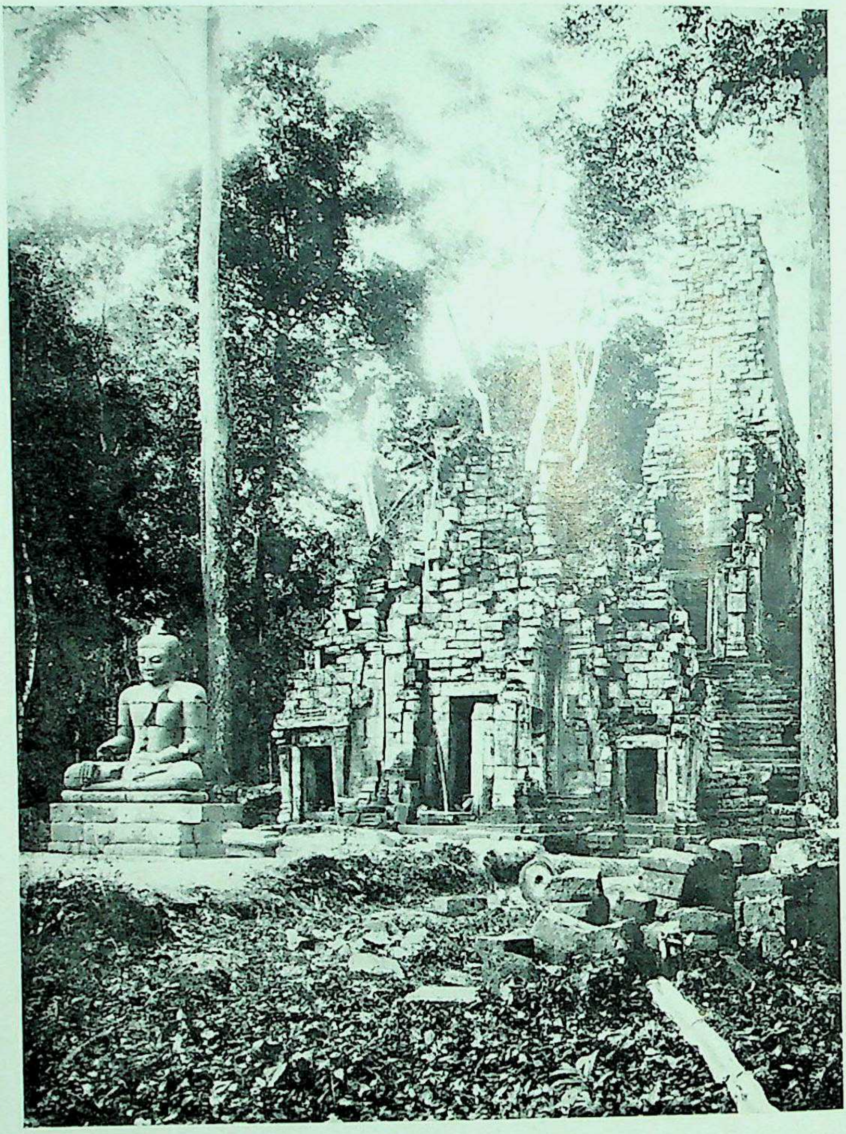
AngkorThom—showing demons at the gateway.

(SEE PAGE 70)



Khmer princesses beneath the platform of the Leper King.

(SEE PAGE 72)



Prah Palilay—in such a grove as this the Buddha rested.

(SEE PAGE 73)

Ruins and Reconstruction

You walk along the broad road fronting the terraces. A little further on there is a path on your left. You take it, following it for a hundred yards or so. A group of Buddhist monks have erected temporary shacks in a clearing. Further, a gigantic statue of Buddha confronts you. It is the Tep Pranam, and the site is that of a Buddhist monastery founded in the ninth century. You continue your expedition. The jungle is already closing around you. A narrow path leads you on. You reach the temple of Prah Palilay, guarded by two beheaded *dvarapalas* and another small seated Buddha. The temple symbolically represents the forest where Buddha rested from his journey when he left Kosambi. It lies in a grove of dense forest. You are surrounded by monstrous trees, heavy undergrowth and giant creepers; the decaying walls are covered with moss. And all this only a stone's throw from the broad road leading to the Elephant Terrace and the platform where once stood the palace of the king.

You may go the tourist's way, and visit all that is worth seeing according to the guides. But there are little out-of-the-way places that are somehow more alluring. One lies off the Grand Circuit, between Prah Khan and Neak Pean. If you follow the official cicerone you will miss it, for it is not on the regular route. No well-beaten path leads to the temple, and you have to fight your way to it through a wild tangle of vegetaion. Heavy undergrowth obstructs your passage; thorns tear your clothes and skin. You hold out of your way stout twigs that swish back and stun you. A thousand stinging burs cling to your hands and face. Suddenly above the tall grass rises the pediment of a small sanctuary. It is Prasat Prei. It is little. And it is of no consequence among the other gigantic temples in Angkor. But you've had your fun. You've recaptured in some small measure the thrill of the explorer who discovers a hidden city.

Always Angkor promises you these delights. A little off the beaten track and you are in the deeps of the awesome forest, your heart full of exploratory urges, for the jungle is a constant temptation. Maybe, you think, behind that wall of trees there is an undiscovered shrine.

But the impulse must be resisted. You will only lose your way, and all to no purpose. The French have every shrine in the area recorded, numbered and charted. Besides; with deceptive simplicity and a commendable sense of propriety they have cleared away only so much of the jungle as interfered with their work of restoration. Roads have been built where necessary, broadened where they already existed, and the rest left almost as Mouhot found it. You are left with a thrilling sense of following immediately on his traces.

Of course, there has been a considerable amount of reconstruction. In some cases a part of the temple has had to be rebuilt from the dislodged material by a process known as anastylosis. Each block is marked and photographed and its position planned; the whole structure is then dismantled and, after the rubbish in the interstices is cleared away, set up again. All of which has necessitated the removal of debris, the clearing of trees and the shifting of centuries of rubble. For Angkor Vat a small army of workmen was employed to pull out the masses of weeds from the moat, clear a way through the courtyards and the corridors and relieve the ruins of obstructive growths and fallen stone. From the upper terrace tons of earth were removed, and to cut the entwining roots of the great trees special shears three feet long had to be used.

Today you see abundant evidence of French imaginative restraint. Whereas a more "efficient" dispensation would have torn down the obstructing jungle around the ruins and destroyed the entangling trees that crown dozens of sanctuaries, the French have left nature as far as possible still in possession. In Prah Khan, Ta Som and other temples the trees still dominate the scene. The central sanctuary at Neak Pean was till 1935 in the powerful and picturesque grip of a gigantic India-rubber tree whose roots almost completely concealed it from view. When a great storm split the tree, there was no sigh of relief that now the sculpture hitherto hidden from sight had been brought to light, but a universal cry of dismay that one of the most romantic of Khmer monuments had been made commonplace. Indeed, without the jungle Angkor is just a shell and a museum piece. It was wise archaeology not to have been too meticulous about clearing the ruins.

Neak Pean

For the creation of the lyrical floating sanctuary of Neak Pean alone the Khmers would deserve immortality as a race of architects and sculptors of the highest excellence. From the centre of an artificial pool seventy five yards square rises a circular platform upon which a single-chambered shrine is built in the form of a lotus bud, with four of its basal petals ornately carved. In the pool before the door is the figure of Balaha, the saviour horse, to whom cling the mortals who would otherwise drown in the sea of mortality.

Neak Pean receives its name, which means "entwined *nagas*", from the bodies of two stone serpents which curve around the base of the platform, their heads raised on either side of the steps leading to the sanctuary, and their tails twisted together at the other end. It was probably a sacred pool, and associated with the worship of the serpent in its more esoteric phases, as the sexual symbolisation of the entwined tails would suggest.

Four square tanks are built outside the walls of the main pool at the cardinal points, each connected with the central basin by means of a gargoyle. The eastern gargoyle represents a human head, a little masterpiece of Khmer sculpture.

The study of Khmer portrait sculpture has so far been only superficially undertaken by scholars and still awaits closer attention. There are those magnificent heads, divine and devilish, which line the approaches of Angkor Thom and Prah Khan, the gods grave, impassive, heroic, the demons frenzied and possessed, full of malignant energy and fierce passion; there are the noble figures of Buddha, Lokesvara, and the bodhisattvas, the sublime features of Vishnu, grave and god-like, and all that unclassified host of smiling figures that everywhere greets the visitor to Angkor. Wonderfully indeed, and with unmatched spirituality and expressiveness did the Khmer sculptors portray the features of their models.

All these fine specimens must, however, give place to the magnificent gargoyle on the eastern side of Neak Pean. The face is square and strong, the ears large, as tradition represents Buddha's to be, the eyebrows form a gentle undulating line over the broad forehead, half of which is covered by a decorated coronet. And the mouth is open in a spirit of joyousness as though it intones a pæan of praise to the rising sun.

Water

" *And sure the reverent eye must see*
A purpose in Liquidity." (R. Brooke)

Neak Pean is a water temple and typifies the Khmer predilection for water. Where it was not readily available they employed ingenious engineering devices to bring it to their thresholds. In the Khmer temples and palaces there is always a special area reserved for water.

There are moats around the city and the sanctuary. The temple of Angkor Vat . . . . three miles; the city of Angkor Thom . . . . eight miles . . . . moats around Prah Khan, Ta Keo, Banteay Kdei. Lustral basins for ceremonial ablutions, sacred tanks for the worship of the *naga,* pools for purificatory baths; reservoirs and hydraulic constructions without number in the Royal Palace around Phimeanakas, Bayon and Neak Pean. In Angkor Thom the basins and canals are intercommunicating, and an ingenious hydraulic system maintained a constant level in pools and cisterns. In the countryside around the capital there were complete irrigation systems, artificial waterways, flood-gates and sluices, all showing the Khmer preoccupation with water.

The monastic temple of Banteay Kdei was situated near the artificial pool of Srah Srang, 800 metres long and 400 wide. Due east of Angkor Thom, lying between Banteay Kdei and Neak Pean is the huge artificial reservoir called the Eastern Baray, five and a half miles long and one and one third miles wide; in the centre stood the pyramid-temple called the East Mebon. Today the lake is dry, and in season is used for the cultivation of rice. The Western Baray, due west of Angkor Thom, is another artificial lake, nine miles by two, and in its centre is the tiny Brahmanical sanctuary called the West Mebon; only an excuse for the Khmer devotion to water. Authorities declare variously that these two large spaces of water were inland harbours connected in earlier days with Tonle Sap, or that they were used for the storage of water for irrigation during the dry season, or utilised for the preservation and culture of fish.

If we study the bas-reliefs and reflect on the Khmer fascination for water-scenes, the Churning of the Ocean, the frequency with which the fish motif is apparent, the depiction of the *makara* or marine monster, crocodile, manatee, whale, of fishing, boating and sea-faring scenes, and the complex systems devised to bring water to their doorsteps we should hesitate to accept too readily the facile theory of the experts. We shall have to go back to a remote and prehistoric epoch, when the appurtenances of a fish culture, with which perhaps fish-worship by a fish-totem tribe are associated, were deeply implanted in the Khmer psyche. Even today the most important Cambodian holiday is the great Water Festival celebrated at Phnom Penh, the fish symbols stylised now, and barely recognisable.[1]

The Forest Primeval

A little outside the northern gate of Angkor Thom is the fortified temple of Prah Khan, supposed to have been built by Jayavarman VII. At one time the sacred sword, Prah Khan, the palladium of the realm bestowed by Indra, was housed in this sanctuary, guarded day and night by special priests. The temple, almost as extensive as Angkor Vat, is entered by four gates at the cardinal points, with avenues of deities and demons, each face a vivid portrait, dignified or diabolical. For once their opposing forces are united in a common purpose, yoked by necessity to obtain the nectar of life, without which they will all perish, gods and demons alike. It is an old motif in Angkor, this Indian episode of the Churning.

The temple within is a scene of havoc unbelievable. Really to savour its haunting atmosphere it must be visited early in the morning, and alone. Then there steals over you the eerie thrill of the pioneer who accidentally stumbles upon the apparition of a deserted city in a wilderness.

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[1] xxii p. 29, xxiv p. 34.

To the east of Angkor Thom lie the temple of Ta Prohm, once rich enough to support over a hundred hospitals; and the monastic fortress of Banteay Kdei, studded with little hermetic cells shut with double doors operated from within to ensure absolute seclusion. These temples and dozens of others in this area evoke a similar feeling, and succeed in giving the lone wanderer the feeling of intruding upon unearthly scenes of cataclysmic desolation.

From inscriptions on a stele recently discovered we learn that Ta Prohm and other temples were once the abode of thousands of priests attached to their service. Ta Prohm had 18 high priests, 2700 officiating priests, 2000 acolytes, and a congregation of 66,000 men and women who came to worship, offer flowers and fruit to the gods, and money to the priests. The old legends were related in song and mime by 600 dancing girls who were also lodged within the temple precincts.

The bright oil lamps, the golden and garlanded images, the endless stream of worshippers, must have presented a vivid and spectacular pageant. In the treasury was a cauldron full of gold; another full of silver; about 50,000 pearls, over 4,000 precious stones. There were also five tons of gold crockery. The daily offerings included tons of rice and barrels of butter and rare oils. The paved galleries overflowed with the press of people, and the courtyards buzzed with their chatter. More than 3,000 villages contributed to the temple's needs.

Today these places are the haunt of the lizard and the bat. The courtyards are choked with broken blocks of stone. The paved entrances overflow with a tangled mass of vegetation. As you pursue your course within the temples you catch a glimpse at the end of the corridors on either side, of a narrow shaft of light that brightens up a bas-relief, or reveals a fallen pedestal, a broken pediment, or a fragment of statuary, all enmeshed in a network of strangling roots and creepers. Outside you see further architectural treasures, a smiling idol, a fractured column. You have an impression of mountains of rubble, each piece of which is part of a delicately carved moulding, a fragment of Vishnu's face, the stump of a *dvarapala's* foot....

Giant trees cover the area where once the long procession of worshippers moved. Their ribbed roots form crazy patterns on the floor of the courtyards. Some of the tree-trunks flatten out a few feet off the ground, and spread like bat's wings to the sprouting roots. Beneath your feet is a writhing, serpentining sea of these roots; the earth is thick with them; they lie athwart your path like a wall; they entwine themselves around the columns; they break through the floors of the sanctuaries; within their powerful grasp they clamp the tottering summits of the outlying shrines, growing above them like monstrous plumed helmets or a coiffure of luxuriant foliage. Creepers and lianas twist themselves serpent-like around the stout trunks; little nests of orchids and epiphytes high up on the trees send out thin adventitious sprays of stringy roots boring into the body of the giant trees; ferns that might be from the Mesozoic era grow in profusion; black and velvety butterflies flutter about, presenting a spectacle that might be a scene from some prehistoric period or from another planet, rather than our present, prosaic, familiar earth.

This you feel is the forest primeval. It is a jungle scene of a past age. The shelter of the earliest primates were arboreal haunts such as these. Beneath the leafy canopy the scene of man's handiwork is like the ephemeral green bug that lives for a day.

As the wind rustles the treetops hundreds of leaves rain

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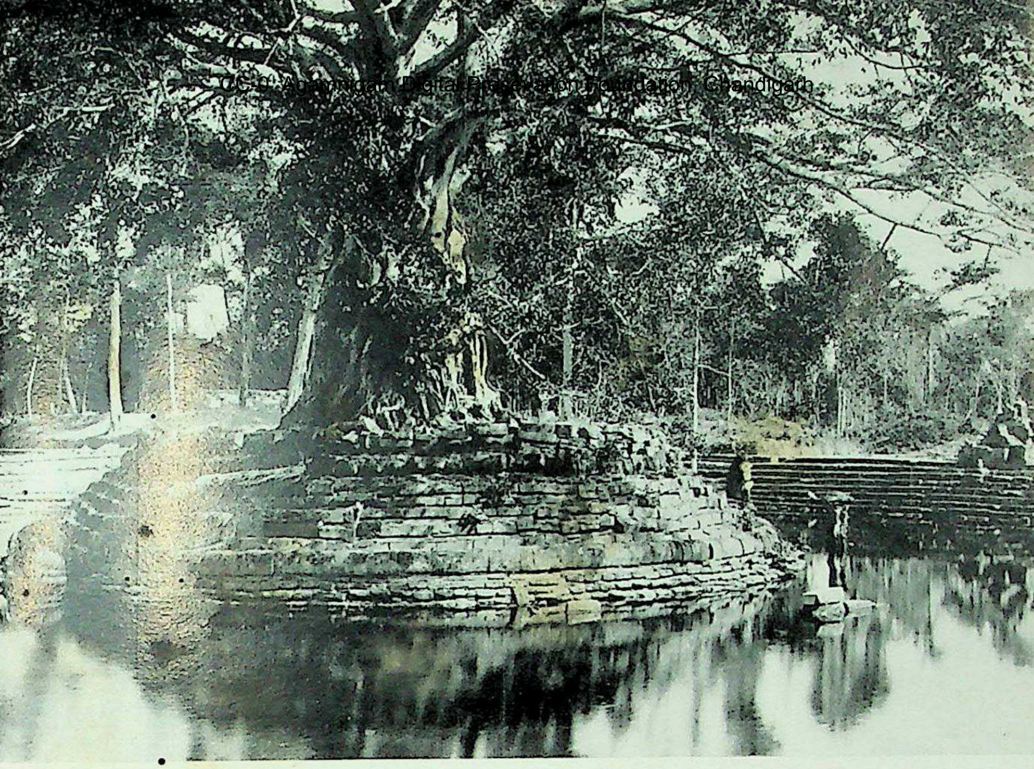
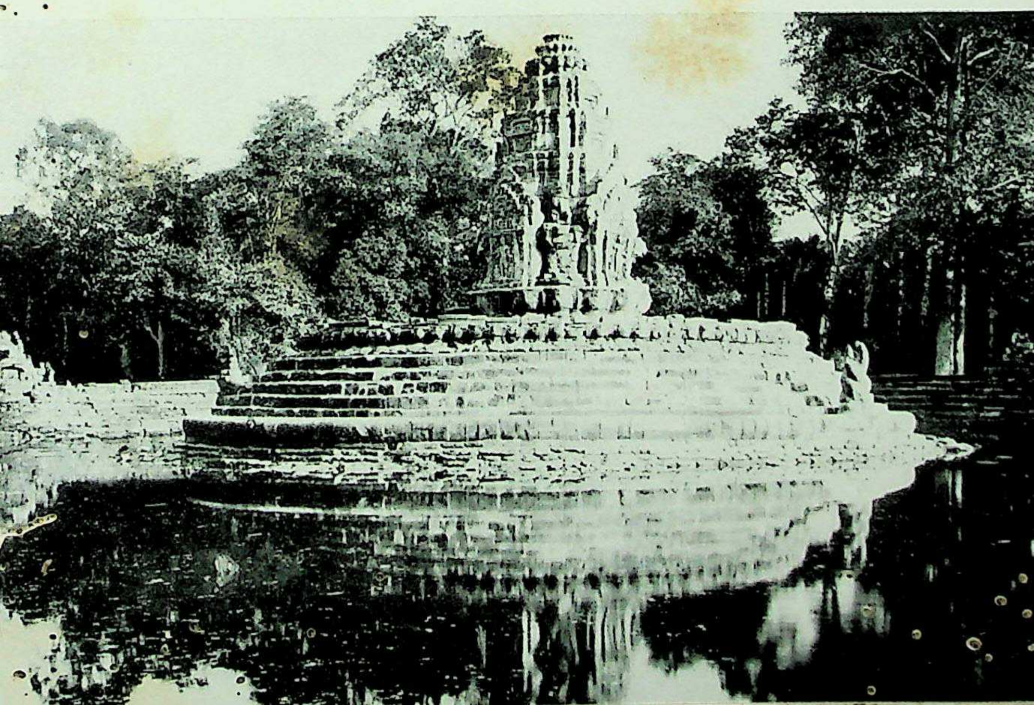
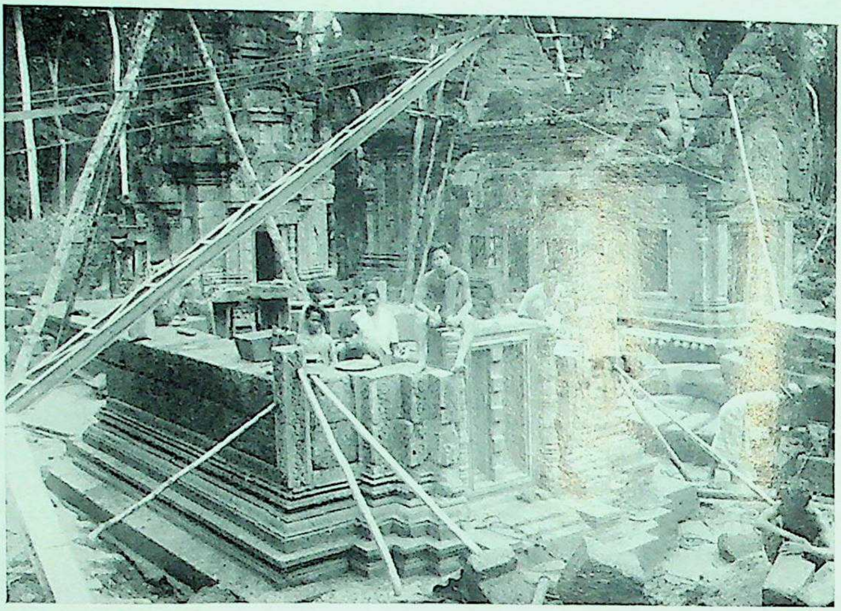


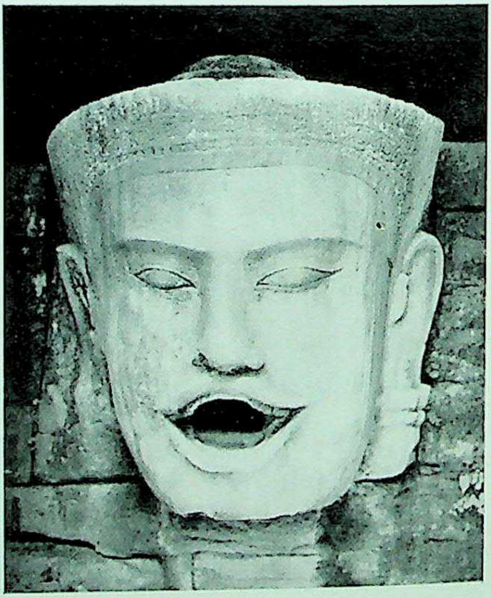
The floating sanctuary of Neak Pean, before reconstruction. (SEE PAGE 75)

Neak Pean after reconstruction. (SEE PAGE 75)





Anastylosis. Reconstruction of Banteay Srei. (SEE PAGE 74)



Gargoyle of Neak Pean. " . . . the mouth is open in a spirit of joyousness as though it intones a paean of praise to the rising sun."

(SEE PAGE 76)

about you, adding another layer to the yellow sheet of leaves at your feet. There is suddenly no wind. The last leaf flutters down. You hear it fall on its fellows with a crisp sound. And then there is a hush: a long enveloping solemnity. One waits for a break in the monotony of the growing silence; for a sound in the distance; the call of a bird; a broken twig.

None of these breaks the spell. The unnatural lull continues. You know it is not peace. It is an ominous and expectant quiet; a hush that is like the prelude to an unknown apocalypse. The seconds pass....

Into the background of your thoughts a high whistle intrudes. So high you think it is a trick of the silence or your eardrums. And suddenly the place is alive with a tiny shrill noise that grows in waves around you and fills the forest air. This cicada symphony seems to set in motion the whole pageantry of sound once more. The birds sing again; the wind rustles the treetops; the leaves, ochre and old gold, fall in hundreds with the sound of rain.

In the distance you hear the honk of the Grand Hotel bus bringing a batch of tourists on the Grand Circuit. You wonder which is to be preferred: the unbearable silence you have just experienced, or this impending cacophony of tourist voices that is about to shatter the forest quiet.

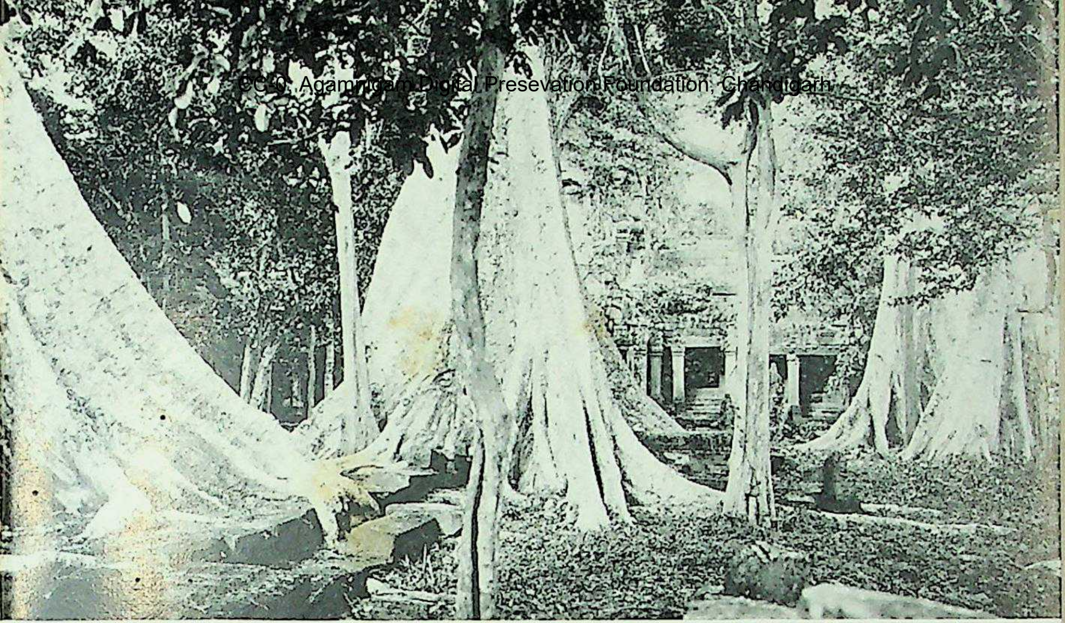
The Bayon

The Bayon is situated in the middle of Angkor Thom; its outer walls form a rectangle of 700 by 550 feet. There are double galleries enclosing the courtyard, in the centre of which the temple rises, 130 feet above the ground. Once it had a tower of gold. It cannot be compared for size with Angkor Vat, but within its compass is conceived with much intricacy. Yet there is a logical arrangement of its main features, and the vestibules, corridors, chambers and galleries are all intricately and pleasingly interrelated.

The galleries have bas-reliefs executed on the walls, and like a picture-book they depict the varied life of the Khmer capital during the 13th century. In the interior galleries there are scenes from the epics, with the position of honour being given to Shiva; at the time of the bas-reliefs the Bayon, originally a Buddhist temple, had been converted into a Shaivite shrine. The outer galleries of this stone panorama feature the warriors, princes, priests, women, workmen, dancers, boatmen, stone-cutters, hunters, and others who played the prosaic role allotted to mere mortals.

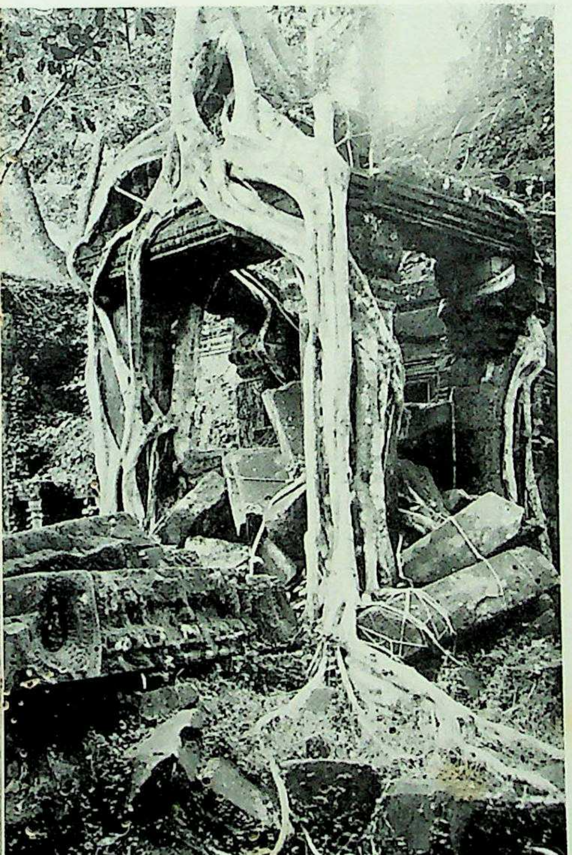
Within the limitations of a restricted plan the creators of the Bayon attempted to construct as many marvels of architecture and sculpture as human ingenuity could devise. If the intention of the architect was to give the temple an aspect of magnificence and wonder worthy of the gods, he has succeeded without any doubt. Rising from a flat, central plain, and sprung from what has the appearance of a high sculptured plinth, the concentrated mass of mounting face-towers has an effect both weird and wonderful. It is a sculptured mountain, a bizarre pyramid of portrait-towers and gigantic faces, whose appearance gives one the feeling that the whole structure has been created by beings from another sphere. It is a spectacular achievement, belonging more to the realm of fantasy than religious architecture.

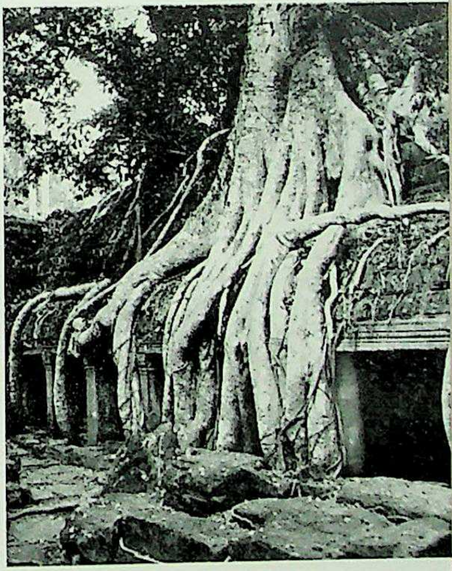
Each stone tower in this forest of pinnacles has four faces, each face lightly touched by a smile, remote, mysterious, inscrutable. This celebrated Khmer Smile is a recurring feature of their portraiture. There are fierce and scowling demons, impassive Buddhas and Lokeshvaras, there are deities depicted in combat, and *yakshas* with features contorted with rage or pain. But like a *leitmotif* in this



Ta Prohm. The paved courtyards overflowed with priests and worshippers.

(SEE PAGE 80)



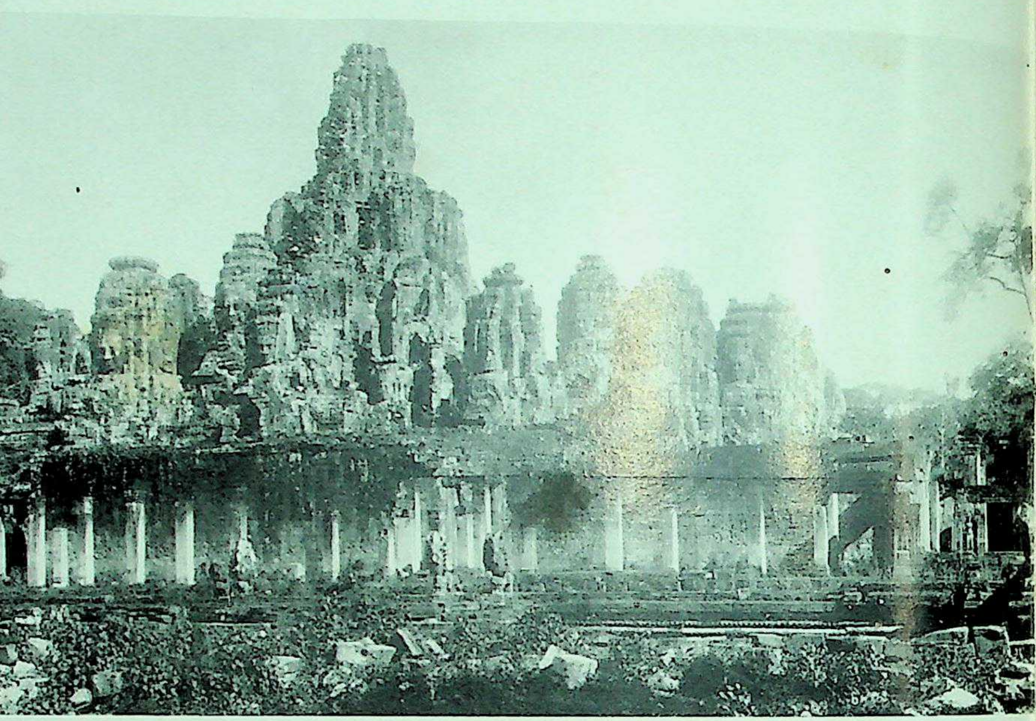


A cascade of roots screens the cells where the hermits meditated.

(SEE PAGE 80)

Left: Roots like Nagas, and broken blocks of stone impede your progress.

(SEE PAGE 80)



Bayon—a bizarre pyramid of portrait towers. (SEE PAGE 81) sculptural opera is the complacent Khmer smile. Depicted once it would call for no special comment. But always and everywhere it greets you, indescribable in its simplicity and gentleness. It lightens up the bas-reliefs and puts a touch of animation into the cold sculptured stone. In Banteay Srei, Ta Keo, Prah Khan, the Terraces in Angkor Thom, Angkor Vat, everywhere, you meet the Khmer smile, sometimes mischievous and gay, sometimes aloof and contemplative, seductive or frigid, perhaps even sinister, as Pierre Loti found it,[1] but always mysterious and fascinating.

The faces in the towers of the Bayon are said to represent the Living Buddha of Mahayana in his incarnation as Jayavarman VII. It is an apposite identification, for there is something divine and remote about this human and understanding smile.

Each face is square, the nose broad and with wide nostrils; the eyes are open and yet seem at times to have lowered lids; the lips are full and curve into a smile, gentle and full of wisdom; in the changing light the expressions vary, becoming aloof, imperturbable, imperious. But there is no suggestion of a sneer, no diabolical smirk at human foibles; only a calm smile of bliss and beatitude.

Leonardo had musicians play for his model to capture the smile that made his *Mona Lisa* famous. It was surely something more than a passing inducement of this sort that served to inspire the models of the Khmer sculptors. These smiles must have been everywhere around them. They must also have been within, to enable them to infuse the stone faces with such a suggestion of tranquillity. There can be no doubt that the Khmer sculptors who fixed those features in the hard rock are worthy of being placed in the front rank of the world's artists.

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[1] lxxiii p. 225.

In Siem Reap a modern temple attempts a copy of the famous smile in a sculptured group over its gateway. The pathetic figures can only grimace and grin.

Khmi and Khmer

Some scholars find Mayan and Aztec[1] influences in the grotesques of the sculptured carvings, in the stylised stonework and in the chiselled foliage of Angkor, and see in the pyramidal temples a resemblance to the Mexican teocalli.

If any such remote influences are to be invoked, then Persia or Egypt can exhibit more likely sources than Central America or Mexico, though most of them antedate the Khmers by centuries.

There is a suggestion of the Pharaohs in the Khmer passion for building. Each successive ruler raised at least one temple, if he reigned long enough for it.[2] The Khmis, as the Ancient Egyptians were called, built them as tomb-structures, the Khmers in order to house the soul-stuff. Each ruler was endowed with this soul-stuff, divinity incarnate in the king, and for each king a temple was required to safeguard and nourish the precious element. More than eight hundred monuments exist in Cambodia, dedicated to the gods, for the worship of the Buddha, for the peace of the ancestral spirits, or for the habitation of the soul-stuff.

There are other aspects of the Khmer way that also put you to mind of Egypt. The looming portals, the solitary monumental doorways, as in the pyramidal brick-temple of Bakong (near Roluos, 880 A.D.); the long vista of doors, decreasing in the distance to a little oblong of light at the far end, such as one sees in Angkor Vat and the Bayon: they remind one of pictures seen of Old Egyptian temples, with massive pylons guarding the entrances. Both Egyptians and

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[1] xxii p. 1. [2] xxiv p. 141.

Khmers built in a simple, massive, monumental style, with great blocks of stone; the capitals square, the lintels heavy, to support the weight of the superstructure.

Then there are those standing figures, recalling the statues of the Nile Valley, flat-footed, immutable, hieratic, especially when you suddenly come upon them ranged in long lines in the shadowed galleries; the rigid stance, the heavy joints, so archaic, so eternal. In the bas-reliefs the feet are shown in profile, sideways, in such a style as would have pleased the tastes of the Egyptian priest-sculptors. The Khmer conventions seem to have been fixed early, and with only slight variations these were followed for centuries. There was little attempt at innovation, as though its needs were dictated by immutable norms set down in a remote past. This lasted till the time of Jayavarman VII whose artists burst forth into new forms. After they had had their say in altering the time-honoured conventions Khmer art seemed to have lost its potency.

Khmer Art

Seemingly, the art of the Khmers has no discernible origins, no sources in any art form except the superficial origins that can be traced to Malaya, Oceania, India, Java, Assyria, Sumeria, Egypt, Persia .... the names can be extended to form an impressive list. Like Jayavarman II it was " a great lotus which has no stem ".

But it is sublime and overpowering. Unmatched and unmatchable anywhere. Egypt may be vaster, Greece more graceful, India more exuberant, China more ornate. But none of these has the eerie and almost unearthly grandeur of some of the art masterpieces seen in the Khmer ruins. It is like the fantastic creation of some super-civilized race of prehistory, and has qualities at once dream-like and real.

Indeed, so strange does Khmer art appear, so trance-like and other-worldly that one observer concluded that Khmer art was born of drug-taking, and Angkor was an opium-dream in stone.[1] And yet another, beholding a sudden vision of the aspiring towers as though in flight heavenwards, held that the whole of this weird civilisation was maintained by supplying to the Chinese market, for fashioning into the tiaras of Chinese brides, the wings of the kingfisher.[2] In the presence of Angkor no theory seems too fantastic.

The Bayon, " the most imaginative and singular monument in the world," according to Sitwell,[3] was the last of the great creations of Jayavarman VII, and we see in it how the excessive energy of the Khmers has overreached itself. Already we can discern symptoms of decline, for it was at once " brilliant and neurotic."[4] Khmer art has arrived at a flamboyant and baroque stage, reflecting the exuberant and vivid personality of the ruler. The empire has unlimited resources and the king utilises them lavishly to make magnificent buildings on a grandiose scale and of fantastic and elaborate design. Everywhere we begin to see those images of immense size, those faces of gigantic proportions, towering gateways, like the vestibule of a temple, *nagas*, gods and demons of titanic dimensions. All very spectacular, awe-inspiring, haunting . . . . and marked with the stigma of incipient decay.

The Life of the People

Chou Ta-kuan describes the daily life of the people some time after the reign of Jayavarman VII. Though his attitude is superior he feels no trifle to be beneath his notice: if he was sometimes prudish he was none the less curious.

He was struck with the art of Kambuja and writes with appreciation of the magnificent temples he saw around him.

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[1] lxi. [2] xcix p. 116. [3] xcix p. 76. [4] lxxiii p. 14.

The art of religion is one thing, the art of life is another. Chou Ta-kuan was not favourably impressed with the manners of the people, whom he found coarse and barbarous; it made no difference whether they were seamen, villagers or city-dwellers.

He describes the inhabitants as black and ugly, though some of the palace women, sheltered from the sun are "white as jade." Both men and women, including queens and princesses go about barefoot, and naked above the waist.

Debauchery is rife and is not treated as a crime. The law is lenient. A thief is dealt with by his captive who inflicts a beating on him on the spot. For certain crimes amputation of fingers and toes is not uncommon. Trial by ordeal is frequent, and for heinous offences the criminal is buried alive in a ditch. Comments Chou Ta-kuan, "It is barbarous!"

The royal apartments and the houses of the nobility are roofed with lead, the rich have tiles of yellow earthernware, and the ordinary people roofs of thatch. The houses have no facilities for sewage disposal, but two or three families dig and use a ditch and then go to the pond to wash themselves, always using the left hand for the purpose, as the right hand is reserved for food. When they see the Chinese using paper they make fun and shut their doors. And another thing the visitor will notice is that in this country women pass water while standing. Says Chou Ta-kuan, "It is ridiculous!"

It is the custom for parents to send for priests to deflower their girls. If they are the daughters of rich people this is done between the ages of seven and nine, virgins of lesser degree before they are eleven. Only priests are regarded as sufficiently powerful to resist the perils of the blood-taboo, and they alone exercise the *jus primæ noctis*. The priest receives a fee of wine, rice, silk, linen, areca or silver, though in the case of poor girls he performs the task gratis, regarding it as a work of charity. He may only deflower one girl a year and when once he has been engaged he must refuse all other requests.

On the night in question the parents give a great banquet, to which friends and relatives are invited. The musicians make as much noise as possible and everyone joins in, creating a terrible din; the sound is deafening for on this night the people are allowed to make as much noise as they please. The priest and the girl sit in two pavilions separately. When the moment arrives the priest enters the girl's pavilion and deflowers her with his hand; he then soaks his hand in wine, and the relatives and friends all mark their foreheads with it, and those who wish sip the wine. Some say that the priest has actual sexual relations with the girl, but this is not certain. The Chinese cannot understand these things easily and so the exact truth cannot be known. Before the ceremony the girl sleeps with her parents, now she is free to move about and go where she pleases. The constant prayer of the girl's parents now is, " May men desire you!"

Many persons have mistresses, and some men are to be found who will actually marry women who have served them in this manner. This shocking custom gives rise to no shame or astonishment. If the husband goes away on business for even a few nights the wife will set up a woeful plaint saying that she is not an angel and cannot be expected to sleep alone. If she takes a lover and the husband discovers them in the act, he is allowed by law to punish the guilty man by pressing his feet in a vice until the lover promises him sufficient monetary compensation.

Chinese traders like the country, since houses are easy to furnish and manage, commerce is simple and direct, little clothing is required, rice is plentiful, and women are willing. There are many homosexuals to be seen in the market place, trying particularly to attract the Chinese for rich presents. " It is hideous," Chou Ta-kuan expostulates, " It is vile."

After the delivery of a child the mother makes a preparation of cooked rice and salt and applies it to her sexual parts for twenty-four hours, so that the swelling subsides. One young woman belonging to the family with whom Chou Ta-kuan stayed, carried her child in her arms to the river and bathed him, the day after delivery. The women, concludes the visitor from China, are extremely lustful, and are eager for the embrace at all times, even a day or two after they have given birth. All this tells on them. They marry early, indulge excessively, and are old hags before thirty.

Chou Ta-kuan's record reveals a society in which women played a conspicuous part. They moved about freely, conducted most of the trade,[1] took an active part in state affairs and often held high political office, including that of judge;[2] Chinese writers as a whole praise the women of Cambodia, not only for their freedom but also for their knowledge of astrology, and for their acquaintance with political and administrative affairs.

Women were free to worship on their own, and could aspire to be religious teachers.[3] We hear of an Uma (wife of Shiva) being fashioned by Indravarman I, and consecrated by the women of the palace.[4]

The genealogies of the Khmer kings were matrilineal in character,[5] and so was the succession to the pontificate—both striking facts in a Brahmanical dispensation. Many Khmer kings, including Bhavavarman I and Suryavarman I, claimed the throne by virtue of descent from the female line, even when legitimate claimants in the direct male line existed.

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[1] xxii p. 247. [2] xxii p. 135. [3] xxii p. 217. [4] xxii p. 102.
[5] xxii p. 98.

Bhavavarman I married Kambuja-rajalakshmi, queen of Chenla, born in the maternal family of the Chenla kings.[1] She was not the only ruling queen of Kambuja, for we learn that Jayadevi wife of Jayavarman I succeeded her husband on his death in 680 A.D.[2]

Again, it is recorded that Jayavarman VIII dedicated the temple of Mangalartha in A.D. 1295 and bestowed upon it the revenue of three villages. To secure the perpetuity of the cult he established a hereditary chief and provided that if the male line should become extinct, the female line should have the quality to celebrate the cult.[3]

Finally, according to George Coedès, Queen Mahendradevi had, by two different husbands, two sons who ruled as Rajendravarman II and Harshavarman II,[4] which indicates a sociological phenomenon unheard of in a Hindu society: the remarriage of widows.

Golden Twilight

North of the Bayon is an enclosure about 600 yards long and 300 yards broad, within which were situated the Royal Palace, and the other subsidiary buildings where the palace women were accommodated. Most of these buildings, including the royal palace, which were of wood, have perished, burned by the Thai invaders, eaten by tropical insects, rotted by the heavy tropical rain.

In the centre of the enclosure is the aerial palace of Phimeanakas, dedicated to Vishnu. From its pyramidal plinth rises the sanctuary of laterite and sandstone, accessible from four sides by flights of thirty steps of almost vertical steepness. The tiny room that crowned this structure was once of gold. And up the eastern flight of steps the Khmer king would

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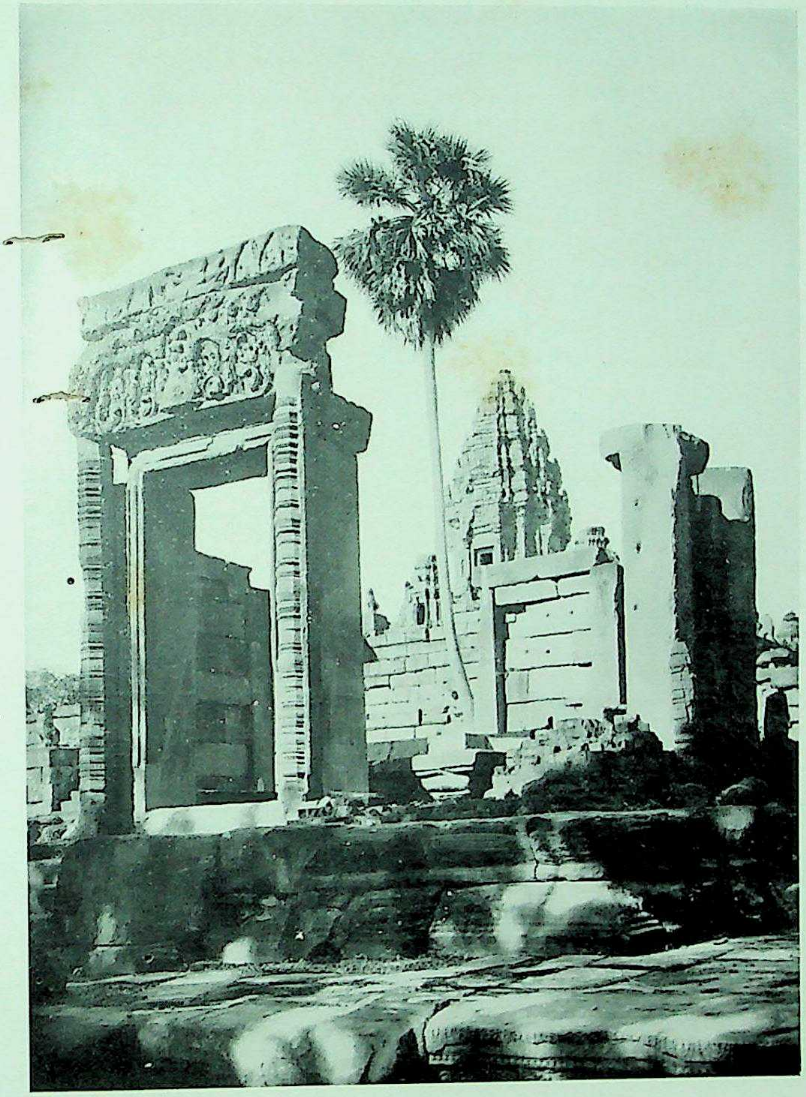
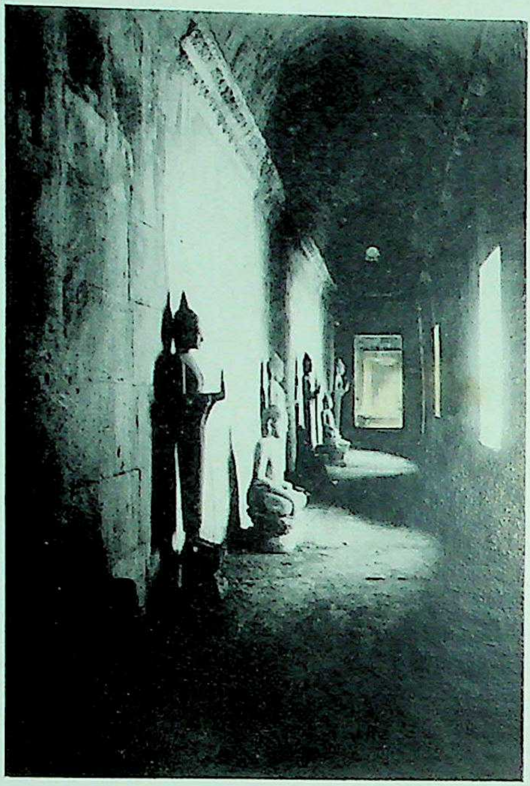
[1] xxii p. 39. [2] xxii p. 57. [3] xxii p. 243. [4] xxii p. 123.



The pyramidal brick-temple of Bakong.

(SEE PAGE 84)



Statues in the shadowed gallaries of Angkor Vat.

(SEE PAGE 84)

The palace of Phimeanakos. A tiny room made of gold once crowned this structure, and here the Khmer King slept with the Naga Queen.

(SEE PAGE 90)

mount every night, enter his gilded chamber and there sleep with the seven-headed serpent queen incarnate in the form of a woman, representing the soul and prosperity of the realm.[1] Chou Ta-kuan who relates the legend adds, " If the serpent queen does not appear then the king's end is nigh. If the king fails to visit the tower a mischance befalls the realm." It was a fertility rite, anciently practiced in these realms to assure an abundant supply of rain and a rich harvest.[2]

The palace enclosure was a walled luxury paradise, a pleasure-garden and a park. It was also a region of mystery, and the Chinese envoy could not learn much of what went on inside, so zealously was the palace guarded. " I have heard," he recounts, " that within the palace are many marvellous chambers, but the vigilance is very strict and it is impossible to penetrate within."

He speaks of a part of the palace where on a raised dais the jewelled beds sparkled, and of a palanquin of gold, with banners and fly-brushes with handles of gold. There were wonderful pools for the worship of the sacred serpent, as well as for the bathing of the palace beauties. And who were these women? Chou Ta-kuan tells us: " Any family which has a beautiful daughter, never fails to take her to the palace, and daughters of high officials are offered as concubines." At the time of the ambassador's visit many of the fairest flowers of the Khmer realm served the pleasure of the monarch Srindravarman.

" The sovereign has five wives ", writes Chou Ta-kuan, " one for the household, and four for the four cardinal points." He also had, " for more precise readings," says Durant, some four thousand concubines.

There were two golden towers at Angkor, and a bridge of gold. Golden frames adorned the council chamber and the room where the king sat in audience had casements of gold. The royal crown was a high pointed tiara of the finest gold. The monarch wore a gown of thickly flowered brocade; on his neck festoons of large pearls, on his fingers heavy rings of gold, set with bright stones; on his wrists and ankles, bracelets of opalescent jewels which glistened like the sun.

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[1] xxiv p. 172. [2] xxii p. 14.

The palms and soles of the monarch were stained vermillion. No other male of the realm might use this stain. It was reserved for the king alone . . . . and for the noble ladies.

The king is an usurper who has killed his predecessor and imprisoned his son in a dark chamber after mutilating him.[1] So when he ventures forth any distance from the royal apartments he takes the precaution of sheathing his body in a suit of armour, " that even if knives and arrows should strike his person they could not wound him." His escort consists of the royal household cavalry, the standard bearers and the palace musicians. Then come five hundred palace girls, holding aloft great tapers, which even in broad daylight are kept lighted. Another retinue of girls carries the royal plate of gold and silver, and a complete set of ornaments. They all have gold ornaments and are clad in rich brocade of intricate design, and have flowers in their hair. After them comes the king's private guard, a regiment of girls carrying lances, shields and bucklers. The king's wives and concubines come next in order, in palanquins, in carriages drawn by goats, in horse-carriages, or on elephants. Their parasols are made of red taffeta from China with fringes reaching the ground and handles of gold. The elephants' tusks are cased in gold; the saddle-cloth, harness and caparisons are shot with gold thread.

At the end of the procession comes the king, his shoulders

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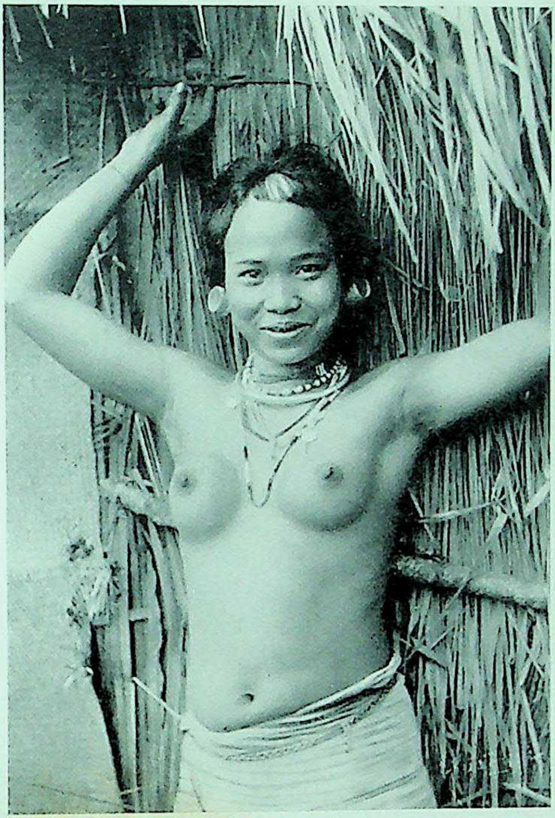
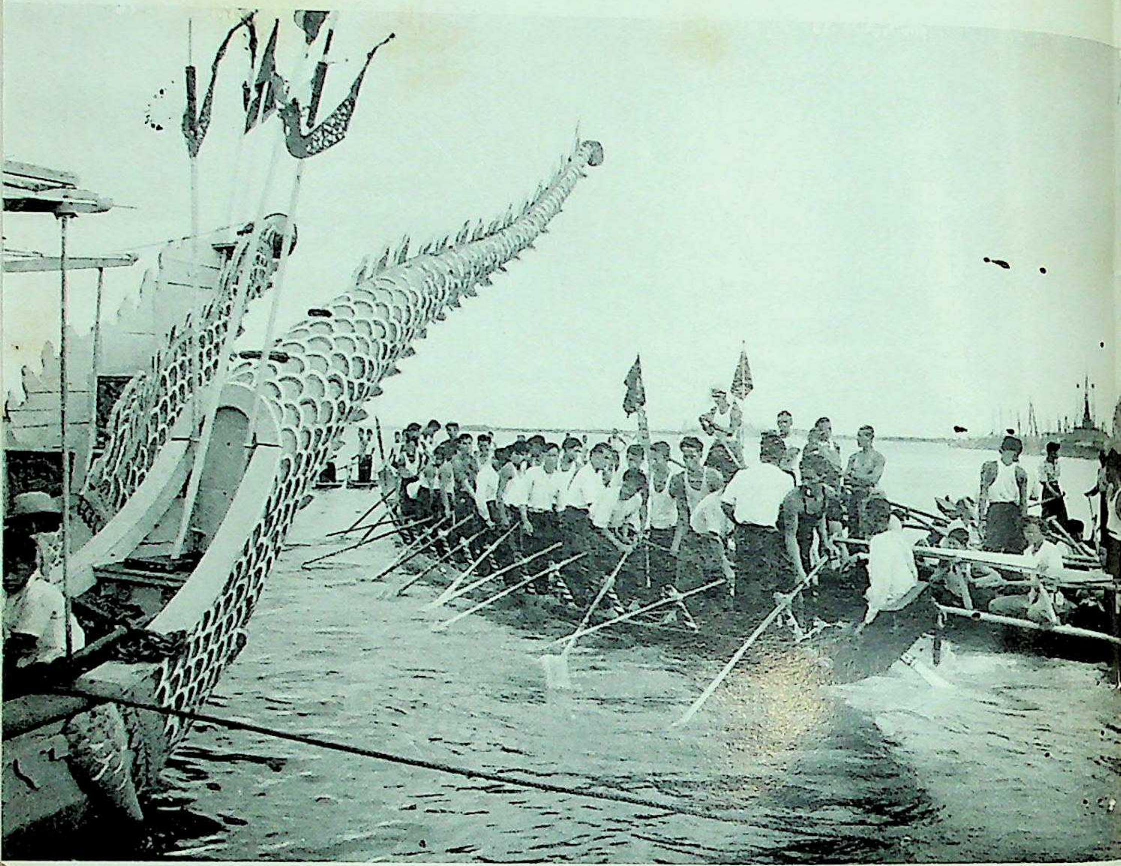
[1] xxii p. 244.



Girl from South Indo-China.



Cambodian Water Festival.

bare, and holding aloft in his right hand the Prah Khan, or sacred sword. It was given to the Khmers by Indra himself, and is the most precious relic of the realm. Today it is kept in state in Phnom Penh, guarded by special priests called *bakus*. The hilt of the sword is of gold, and the blade, about three feet long, of iron. Upon the hilt are wrought figures in relief, of Indra, Shiva and Vishnu.

If the king is on a short visit to some nearby place he uses a golden palanquin carried by four palace maidens.

The king gives two audiences every day for affairs of state. A long note on a conch shell announces his approach. Two palace girls lift the curtains at the golden window, and the king appears, his long black locks intertwined with jasmine stems and decked with jasmine flowers, his body scented with sandalwood perfume and musk. Ministers and people prostrate themselves and touch the earth with their foreheads. Seated on a lion skin he inclines the royal ear to matters of state. When the business is over, or when the king is tired, he signals to his maids who let the curtains fall.

The maturity of the Khmers when Chou Ta-kuan visited the capital was past its peak. The effeminacy of the sovereign, the luxury of the state, were but symptoms of a universal decay. The Chinese ambassador with fine perception sensed the approach of the dissolution of the Khmer empire. In 1312, fifteen years after Chou Ta-kuan departed, the Siamese renewed their relentless attacks on the Khmer capital.

DECLINE

In the eighth month of the year, so the chroniclers tell us, a strange custom was observed in Champa. Armed men were posted in lonely parts of the capital at night; they sprang upon the loiterer and stray wayfarer, quickly covered his head with a hood, and with a small knife cut him open and removed his gall-bladder. This annual levy of gall, made on innocent victims, was collected in a jar, mixed with wine and drunk by the king. Care was taken, says Chou Ta-kuan, to see that no Chinese gall was added, because once the gall of a Chinese victim rotted all the precious liquid that had been collected, so that it could not be used.

Human gall was reputed to be an elixir of fortitude and hardihood, and the annual rite was not confined to Champa. There is nothing to show that the Khmers practiced the custom, even though they were at this time in dire need of some potent elixir to fortify their declining courage. The Chams and the Thais, their traditional enemies, were relentlessly hammering at the tottering structure of the empire. The Khmers were not even in a position to defend themselves, leave alone retaliate, for Chou Ta-kuan observed that "they possess neither bows nor arrows, neither ballistics nor cannon, neither armour-plates nor helmets; and they have neither tactics nor strategy."[1]

The first major indication of their weakness had been felt as early as 1177 when a Champa king ravaged the Kambujan countryside, put to the sword thousands of inhabitants, and burned the capital city. It was no consolation to the Khmers that in 1190 Jayavarman VII made Champa a Khmer protectorate, which it remained for thirty years, for in 1220 the

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[1] xxii p. 249.

Khmers again lost part of Champa, after a series of bloody battles, and also large areas in the west and south to the growing power of the rebellious Thai. The strength of the latter tribes was considerably enhanced by the influx of fugitive Thais from Yunnan fleeing before the Mongol armies of Kublai Khan. By the end of the 13th century the Mongols, or their now subordinate Thai princes ruled practically all Indochina, except Kambuja. And when the Mongol general sent two envoys to the Khmer court they were imprisoned and not allowed to return. A Chinese chronicler, writing more than two centuries after this period, says that Cambodia did not on a single occasion render homage to the Mongol Emperor.[1] It was left to the Thais to exact this subjection.

In 1290 the Thai princes under King Phra Ruang drove out the Khmer viceroy of Sukothai and set up the independent state of Syam. Soon other considerable territory was lost in the Menam valley and in Ligor. The Thais started ravaging the region of the Great Lake and the environs of Angkor, and many skirmishes are recorded in the chronicles. Sometimes the Khmers defeated their enemies: the name Siem Reap, which means "Vanquished Siamese," commemorates one such victory. When Chou Ta-kuan visited the country in 1295-97 he noticed signs of attenuation as a result of repeated Thai incursions. War was weakening the outer defences, and luxury sapping the fibre of the once mighty Khmer empire.

In 1312, fifteen years after the Chinese ambassador returned to China, the Thais attacked from the west, the Chams from the east. The Khmer king retaliated against the Thais, "whose town," it is recorded, in the last Sanskrit inscription of Cambodia, "he tore away as if it were brushwood."

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[1] xxii p. 242.

It was a vainglorious boast, because for him and his successors there was now no question of quelling the rebellion of recalcitrant princes, but a desperate struggle for survival. The Chams and Thais were like vultures attacking a toothless and emaciated lion.

In 1357 there was another destructive attack, led by King Ramadhipati who beseiged Angkor and captured it after a resistance lasting sixteen months. The Siamese army devastated the country and took 90,000 prisoners. Freed at last from the yoke of the Khmers, Ramadhipati founded, on the ruins of an ancient town, the new city of Ayuthia, rivalling the older Siamese capital of Sukothai. This became the centre of a new kingdom of the Thai, but like the other capitals of Indochina it did not survive very long. In the course of the next few centuries proud Ayuthia, " the Invincible," was herself to be humbled by repeated sackings, and finally destroyed by the Burmese.

The Siamese onslaughts on the Khmer capital were cruel and persistent. Invasion followed invasion, particularly large-scale attacks taking place in 1394, 1420 and 1432. In the last assault a final shattering blow was delivered by Paramaraja II of Ayuthia. The city withstood a seige of seven months, until two monks went over to the enemy and gave them information that enabled them to capture it. Angkor fell again, the wonderful temples were plundered, the inhabitants deported and the centre of the Khmer empire irrecoverably ruined. The loss was fabulous. For the Thais the gain was incalculable. Two pagodas erected near Ayuthia by the grateful Thais honoured the memory of the two renegade priests.

Authorities think that this catastrophe was followed by an extraordinary flooding of the Tonle Sap, far in excess of the usual annual rise, which broke the dams and damaged the irrigation systems. By 1432 Angkor was finally and definitely abandoned. Cambodia limped on through the succeeding centuries, but the Khmer empire was prostrated. The Khmers fell, never to rise again.

The Scavenging

What remains of the Khmer monuments, impressive though it is, represents but a fraction of the glory of the Khmers.

From the beginning the city of Angkor was a prey to her covetous neighbours, and to conflicting religious systems. The first capital at Angkor built around Phnom Bakheng was destroyed and burnt by the Chams in 1177. The black-ended brick of the sancturies north of Angkor is proof of Siamese incendiarism in early Khmer days. Other vandal waves dismantled the roofs for iron and lead, or ravaged the sanctuaries in search of the gold and silver and precious stones which the Khmers were known to have concealed under certain slabs of stone.[1]

When the Siamese captured Angkor they carried off the emerald Buddha of Angkor Vat, and it remains today Bangkok's chief treasure. Siam apparently continued her pilfering for centuries, for Mouhot records that his visit to Angkor coincided with that of the King of Siam's representative, who had orders to bring back a choice piece of Angkor statuary, a commission that was doubtless not unusual.

To the periodical depredations of rival armies were added the ravages due to religious rivalry between Buddhists and Hindus. In Cambodia the religion of the benign Buddha inspired some surprising acts of vandalism, intolerance and brutatily. Many were the beautiful grottos and shrines the Buddhists wiped out. Temples that were too large to demolish were cleared of all evidence of Hindu worship, the images destroyed, the fanes converted. Similarly, when Hindu reaction set in, a new wave of destruction took place; the stele of Sdok-Kak-Thom records that Suryavarman I was obliged to call in the troops against the frenzied mob who were tearing down the statues of the Buddhist saints. In the 13th century a gigantic statue of Buddha, seated in the folds of a serpent whose seven hoods rose like an aureole above his head, was smashed to pieces and the fragments cast into a pond. All the other subsidiary statues of the *bodhisattvas* and *lokeshvaras* were also hacked to pieces and replaced by the phallus.

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[1] xxii p. 202.

Finot thinks it not improbable that the Kambujan peasants, when they were freed from the yoke of their masters by the Thai victory, carried out a systematic mutiliation of the monuments in a frenzy of hatred.

Often the temples were dismantled in a more methodical fashion, in order to provide building material for the neighbouring towns, or for newer temples. The blocks of limonite and sandstone that formed the stair to the top of the Shaivite temple of Phnom Bakheng were used in the building of the present citadel of Siem Reap.

Our appreciation for old places and ruined monuments is a very recent convention. Only men with a profound sense of history regret the clearing up of derelict temples, or are troubled when battered antiques are put to some practical use. Persepolis was used for the building of Shiraz; the Forum for the construction of modern buildings in Rome;[1] the Turks used the precious Pentelic marble of the Parthenon, after they had partially destroyed it, for the building of their homes. The Great Pyramid of Egypt which today is terraced into steps was once covered with a fine polished sandstone which was removed to rebuild Cairo after an earthquake. As recently as 1830 a Viceroy of India, Lord Bentinck, whose rule was distinguished by wise government and numerous social reforms, such as the abolition of *sati* and the suppression of the *thugs,* wanted to break up the Taj Mahal and sell it by auction, and was only dissuaded from doing so by the low price of marble.[1] In the 18th century, under orders of the Raja of Banaras, over sixty cartloads of precious material from Sarnath, including fifty statues and a complete stupa of Asoka, were thrown into the river near Bañaras to act as a breakwater for the construction of a bridge, and similar material was also used for the building of a bazaar.[2] The slow demolition of Angkor is only part of a larger area of havoc.

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[1] xxvi p. 215.

With the coming of the French and, in their wake, the tourists, another outbreak of pilfering occurred in Cambodia. Tons of material were systematically looted and carted off for private collections and public museums to Saigon, Hanoi, Phnom Penh, and most of all to France. The Musée Guimet of Paris contains the finest specimens of Khmer art outside Angkor.

There must be a vein of acquisitive vandalism in all of us, for so many tourists have told of the urge they felt to hack off a fragment of a bas-relief or appropriate a tiny carved figure smiling in a hidden niche. Doubtless many still succumb to the temptation in spite of the official prohibition, yearly depleting Angkor of many precious pieces. What must it have been a few years ago when the Khmer ruins were an open house for the world of civilised vandals and curio collectors? Anyone without let or hindrance was free to enter the sanctuaries and pick up and take home whatever his heart desired; help himself to any odd piece that caught his fancy; behead a Buddha he disliked or lop off the breasts and noses of the *apsaras* out of sheer sadistic exuberance. Wind and rain, and the tropical fury of the midsummer sun, and the relentless pressure of a myriad probing roots have perhaps done less irremediable damage to Angkor than enthusiastic collectors, loving savants and overfond admirers of art who have subjected the Khmer masterpieces to barbarous mutilations.

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[1] cxi. [2] lxxvi.

The Khmer Miracle

When the full story of the Khmer empire comes to be written it will surely form one of the most fascinating episodes of history. Till a few decades ago even the name was unknown to the world. Their architectural achievements were hidden in the deeps of the jungle, in one of the remotest regions of the earth's surface. The builders of this magnificent empire started as a village community of Indochinese aborigines settled on the lower reaches of the Mekong river and the Great Lake in the early centuries of the present era.

A small spark from the west carried by a group of merchant adventurers ignited the genius that lay dormant within. The Khmers grew into a mighty nation, extended their empire from the Gulf of Siam to the China Sea, despatched emissaries to the princes of China and India, developed a rule of great enlightenment, and evolved a culture of outstanding refinement, piety and sensitivity. They were a people of gigantic energy and artistic power, sensitive to profound artistic impulses, who built on a grand scale with dignity, simplicity and strength, and created a style of architecture unmatched anywhere in the world.

Then, as dramatically as they emerged from obscurity, they faded. Military strength helped their rise: military weakness hastened their decline. The original impulses, both military and artistic, lost their puissance. The Khmers dispersed, unable to withstand the repeated blows of the Siamese and Chams. They abandoned their cities and their sanctuaries, and these were taken over by the jungle.

Tropical insects destroyed what timber remained; tropical rain rusted the iron braces which were used to clamp the stone together, and when these perished the stone blocks had nothing but their own mass and position to support them. Into the crevices the winds blew the spores of the jungle plants that lodged and sprouted within. Slowly the forests enveloped the temples and palaces where the mighty Khmers had once prayed and feasted. During the course of the passing centuries the jungle silently took over the realm, first throwing a screen of dense foliage around the whole area, then creeping relentlessly to the attack, spreading its fantastic and destructive roots over the courtyards and into the shrines, dislodging the massive walls, pulling apart and tearing down, as though jealous and frenzied at these incomparable works of presumptuous man. Sometimes the trees spread athwart the sanctuaries or squatted over their gateways in triumphant majesty.

The Khmer empire was hidden and humbled. The Khmer palaces became a legendary apparition in the wilderness. The glories of their achievements were consigned to oblivion. So completely forgotten were they that even the people who succeeded them did not know the story of how the stone monuments came to be there. The temples had always existed, for had not the great gods built them?

The Cause of the Khmer Collapse

What caused the downfall of the Khmer empire, and why did its glory fade so suddenly?

Many theories have been advanced concerning the decline and fall of nations, and in the story of the Khmer collapse we can find evidence to support most of these hypotheses: economic decline, " barbarian " invasions, moral decay, or just the natural termination of the allotted span of Khmer national life.

This last organic theory smacks a little of the mystical, but has many advocates. Like man, say the champions of this theory, a nation has a period of infancy, growth, maturity and decline. Wise and judicious living might prolong the maturity of both men and nations, but a single empire lasting forever is as inconceivable as an everlasting man. Some nations are long-lived; Egypt has the longest record for maturity. Other nations never reach maturity, being aborted at conception or strangled at birth.

The salient characteristics of any civilisation are always fixed by an elite consisting of the nobility and the priests. These two classes the world over have ever tended to restrict their prerogatives to themselves, and the whole apparatus of hereditary privileges is calculated to serve this end. Ultimately it spells its own doom, since decay is inherent in endogamous groups. What we call a civilisation or a culture has hitherto been mainly what these privileged classes have made it. So, though it is true to speak of the peasants living on from age to age, it is legitimate to say that the potential of any nation or culture is of limited vitality and duration.

Each period in the history of a people is marked from its predecessors by features only rarely produced from within itself by the slow process of evolution. Civilisation has its origin in a merging of peoples, whom circumstances, such as trade or conquest, have brought together in a common environment. There is a fusion, a term of incubation, followed by the emergence of a new and vigorous racial type, capable of producing those distinguishing features of a culture pattern that mark it from others. The great historical epochs all have a period of preparatory miscegenation out of which are formed the elements that blossom forth into a new creative synthesis. All civilisations are fusions of older components.

The nations commonly associated with enduring civilisations, such as China, India, Egypt, and to a lesser extent Persia, are found on analysis to possess a series of cultures united by a continuous use of common religious and linguistic symbols, and by the factor of geographical location. Indian history, for instance, is marked by a constant synthesising of heterogenous elements introduced at various stages of her development. Whoever the original inhabitants were, Negritos, Australoids, Proto-Malayans—the Dravidian peoples early mixed and merged with them. To this interfusion were added ingredients from Aryans and Mongols of various kinds, Persians, Huns, Greeks, Bactrians, Afghans, Turks, Europeans . . . . At each stage, and wherever it occurred, there was a cultural mutation, a new outlook, a changed technique, that produced in the course of a few generations the characteristics of a cultural phase. The historical epochs are mainly racial.

According to the exponents of this organic theory of the collapse of empires, Europe too has been periodically energised by the "barbarian" reserves on her eastern borders, and they hold that fresh infusions alone can account for the phenomenal rise of the Saracenic kingdoms; when racial pride isolated the Islamic nations each passed through a period of maturity, then went on to its decadence, assisted by a highly gifted but barren intelligentsia, and finally stagnation.

The emergence of the "half-breed" in the regions of south-east Asia does indeed provide a clue to the sudden dynamic energy of Further Indian civilisation between the 5th and 8th centuries A.D. Modern geneticists have dubbed this hybrid vigour "heterosis" and its full implications in the study of the growth and propagation of civilised techniques still await elaboration.

The Khmers fell for the same reason that Assyria fell, and Rome, and the Caliphate. Internally the racial potential was neutralised; luxury corrupted the ruling classes, barbarians harassed the borders. The intelligentsia withdrew into themselves and turned to barren pursuits. Theologians occupied the highest posts, and grammarians ranked next to gods.[1]

In architecture the traditional norms failed to satisfy the monarch and his architects, and they sought the stimulus of the gigantic, the baroque and the fantastic. And here was another reason for the Khmer collapse—the building-mania of the Kambujan kings. The loss of territory and revenue resulting from the military operations against the Thai and the Chams put a further strain on the resources of the kingdom by reducing its wealth and depleting its manpower. Even the maintenance of the hundreds of already existing monuments was a task burdensome in itself, but when to this was added the strain of erecting larger temples and more imposing sanctuaries, the weight of their construction and upkeep must have been well-nigh insupportable.

The conditions were thus ripe for the collapse of the empire, and the final coup was delivered by Hinayana Buddhism, which had slowly and unobstrusively entered the kingdom from Siam, and dislodged Mahayana. In Chou Ta-kuan's time it had become the leading religion of Kambuja, and by 1350 the king himself had adopted it. Pali replaced Sanskrit, and a more simple, strait-laced and passive religion replaced the effulgent Mahayana of the earlier Khmers.

Among the oppressed masses its egalitarian, passive, and meditative teachings must have been slowly working as a potent and dangerous leaven. It prepared them for their renunciation so that, in Finot's words, they "willingly laid down the crushing burden of their glory."[1] The two traitorous bonzes who went over to the enemy were surely representative of a large proportion of the populace, who must have welcomed the invasion as a deliverance from a long oppression, and a gladsome awakening from "the nightmare of temples,"[2] Summing up the cause of the downfall Briggs says, "The wonderful period of ancient Khmer civilisation ended, not so much because the Khmers 'got licked' as because they 'got religion'."[3]

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[1] xxii p. 244.

"Where is balm for the wounded heart?" asks the Franco-Cambodian Eurasian novelist and writer Makhali-Phal, and he answers, "With the very gentle, very poor and Buddhist people of Cambodia."[4]

The Khmers were blotted out; many of their princes slain, their populations deported; or perhaps the people fled of their own accord, as if the capital were ridden with the plague —the plague of their past. Only in part would it be true to call the modern Cambodians their descendants. For of those who fashioned the miracle of their civilisation only a few scattered traces remain. For the rest, a meek and simple people have taken over, and grievously neglected, their priceless inheritance. The Khmers passed from the stage of history which they had occupied for so brief a period with such brilliance.

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[1] xxii p. 260. [2] xxii p. 261. [3] xxii p. 260. [4] xxiv p. 137.

REVIVAL

After the final overthrow of the Khmers the remnant groups assembled themselves under a prince and moved from Angkor. Their migration was not merely a sign of homelessness; it was an old Khmer habit, this weakness for shifting the capital. After Angkor, Basan, then Chatur Mukha, Pursat, Babour, Lovek, Udong and finally Phnom Penh.

In the year 1370, less than twenty years after the attack of King Ramadhipati, during the season of the flooding of the waters, a woman left her hut in search of fuel. She lived on a *phnom* or hill one hundred feet high, near the spot where the muddy waters of a stream flowing from the Tonle Sap joins the mighty Mekong river. At this spot the woman, the Lady Penh, saw a log floating towards her. She dragged it in and carried it home. Splitting it she discovered, embedded in the pith, an image of the Lord Buddha which she set up on the summit of the *phnom*.

The story of the Lady Penh spread about. A shrine was raised for the sacred icon and a village grew up in the locality, called Phnom Penh.—*The Hill of the Lady Penh.* In 1434 King Ponhea Yat selected it as his royal residence. Near the environs of the hill he erected a *stupa* to preserve another sacred reminder of the Lord Buddha, a hair from the *urna* or mole which is traditionally supposed to have grown in the centre of his forehead. The *stupa* is now the centre of worship of the Hinayana Mohanikay sect. The whole region is auspicious. Besides its sanctity as the locality of these precious relics, it is also notable for another fact: the river near Phnom Penh flows northwards for a few months in the year, then back in a southerly direction. To this changed current the waters of the Tonle Sap contribute a considerable quota. In the month of Asoch (November-December) the waters start flowing southwards. The Cambodians celebrate the turn of the waters with a picturesque regatta. Like the long boats of the ancient Funanese, the bow and stern of the Cambodian river craft used for the occasion today, resemble the head and tail of a fish,[1] and refer back to some ancient fish-totem ritual. Perhaps the spot was regarded as sacred long before the pious Lady Penh hauled in the encased Buddha; perhaps it is a site hallowed by aboriginal rites and prehistoric associations.[2]

The Annamese

Phnom Penh did not become the capital of Cambodia for some time, though it continued to grow in importance. In 1528 King Ang Chang made Udong his headquarters, welcoming to his court the first Portuguese missionaries, but he visited Phnom Penh regularly for the annual oblations.

His connection with the Old Khmer monarchy is fictitious. He was reputed to have repulsed the Siamese, but this legend was doubtless fabricated to establish his claim to the throne. In all likelihood he came of Annamite stock.

When the Khmer (now Cambodian) kings emerge into the limelight we find a new element on the eastern borders in the place of the Chams. These are the Annamese, who within the space of a few centuries were able, painlessly and without bloodshed, to appropriate more territory from the prostrate and helpless Cambodians than the Chams were able to do at the height of their power.

A century after the succession of King Ang Chang, Cambodia fell virtually under the Annamese yoke. King Chetta II (cir 1620) who now became " ruler of the territory of the

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[1] xxii p. 29. [2] xxiv p. 34.

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[1] xxii p. 29. [2] xxiv p. 34.

Khmers " had served a short apprenticeship in the Siamese court, but he did not take to Siamese ways. His predilection was for the Annamese. On ascending the throne he married an Annamese princess, and she, like an ardent patriot, brought with her her family, friends, advisers and an army of sycophants and courtiers. High offices were given to the Annamese; an Annamese factory was set up, and an advance post created for aggrandisement by commercial means.

By 1698 Annam had annexed Saigon, till then in Cambodia; by the middle of the following century the Cambodian monarch had to cede to Annam, Tan-an and Go-cong; in the following century Tra-vinh and Soc-trang. Before the end of the century the heir of the Khmer empire, harrassed, persecuted and humiliated by the voracious Annamese fled to Siam for protection. His successor on the throne was an Annamese puppet. By 1813 the Annamese were entrenched in Phnom Penh and were creeping north and west over the body of Cambodia. It was perhaps a conquest not quite agreeable to the conscience of the Vietnamese, for even today they hold special ceremonies and offer a kind of token and symbolical rent to placate the spirits of the original owners of the territories they now occupy.[1]

Under promise of assistance the Siamese swallowed up large areas themselves, so that what remained of Cambodia after the Annamese had finished became virtually a Siamese possession. Even as far back as 1794 Siam had annexed the western provinces of Sisophon, Battambang and Siem Reap, including the whole of the region of Angkor.

During the same period the French began to be busy in Indochina, and transformed Cochin China into a separate colony of their own. In many ways it was a blessing for the Cambodians, for it set a term to Annamese expansion in the rich rice province of Cambodia. King Ang-Duong (1845-59), who had been " crowned " by representatives of the courts of Bangkok and Hue, gladly accepted French protection to escape the threat of his ambitious neighbours. If nothing else, it left the Cambodians in possession of all the white elephants they captured, which before this they were obliged to surrender to the Annamese Emperor.[1]

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[1] lxxiii p. 287.

Norodom, son of Ang-Duong by a *meang* or concubine, succeeded to the throne. As a child he was sent as a hostage to Bangkok and he spoke Siamese fluently; in fact he acknowledged his allegience to the Siamese king. Siam possessed the royal crown and Norodom was preparing to go to Bangkok to be crowned there when the French intervened. They had taken the Cambodians under their ægis.

Like Napoleon, Norodom placed the crown on his head with his own hands at a grand ceremony at Udong. The king had other headgear too, his favourite being a diamond-studded bowler hat of Portuguese design. He was whimsical but pliable. He confirmed his condition of wardship to Napoleon III by a treaty which he signed in 1863 promising him military aid in exchange for freedom of trade. The French authorities found him a ruler after their own hearts. They named the largest avenue in Saigon after him, and presented him with a statue of himself, which was, in fact, a statue of Napoleon III whose head had been knocked off and replaced with a roughly-sculptured head of the Cambodian king.

In 1884 the French imposed a new convention by which the kingdom was incorporated in what became the Indochinese Union, under direct French administration. The Franco-Siamese Convention of 1902 retroceded to Cambodia the provinces of M'lu Prei and Tonle Kepu. Two years later, by means of another convention, the port of Krat and the territories to the south, as well as the islands off the coast from the region of Lem-sing, passed to Cambodia. On March 23, 1907, Siam, under a treaty with France, retroceded to Cambodia the provinces of Battambang, Sisophon and Siem Reap—areas containing the chief ruins of the Khmer empire.

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[1] lxxiii p. 15.

In 1909 King Sisowath, half-brother of Norodom, personally took over, with great ceremony, the custody of Angkor, ancient capital of the imperial Khmers.

EPILOGUE

After almost two centuries of subjection to Siam, Cambodia recovered some small measure of individuality, paradoxical as it may seem, only during the period of French suzerainty over Indochina. Cambodian nationalism received its inspiration from French sources, and the Cambodian renaissance started under French tutelage.

Now that this period is drawing to a close the future of Cambodia is full of uncertainty. A foretaste of what might be in store for the country was had during the recent Japanese occupation. At that time the fortunes of France were at their lowest ebb; in Europe she fell a victim to the might of Germany, and consequently there was little she could do to resist Japanese aggression in the Far East.

As a result of Japanese intervention in South-East Asia certain areas in Cambodia, including Battambang, Sisophon and Siem Reap, were ceded to Siam in 1941. The "Free Cambodian" nationalists, known as the Issaraks (guerillas), who were violently opposed to this cession, took to the *maquis*, and were thus among the first to resist the Japanese and their arbitrary expedients in Indochina. Their aim was complete and unconditional independence.

The Japanese pretended to regard these bush-fighters as only a minor nuisance, but secretly lived in terror of their unexpected raids and death-defying tactics. When Allied successes made the Japanese realise that their days were numbered they hastily set up puppet regimes and declared Indochina "free." In the *mêlée* the Cambodian king asserted his independence on March 15, 1945. After the final defeat of Japan the Washington Conference, held in the following year, restored to Cambodia the areas that Japan had bestowed upon the Siamese for their co-operation in Asiatic co-prosperity.

It was one of France's great misfortunes that she, who gave the lead in modern movements for freedom and fraternity, should not at this juncture, even to make a virtue out of necessity as the British did in India, have renounced her claims to her " little casement on the Pacific." It was a grievous error of judgment that led her to believe that Indochina was worth holding. She fell for the prestige-arguments of the old school of colonialists who were unaware of the new spirit that stirred among Asian peoples, and for the strong commercial interests that had collaborated with the Japanese.

Fortunately the mood did not endure, and a new policy was formulated, envisaging the handing over to the peoples of Indochina the care and control of their own destinies. " Cambodia for the Cambodians " is not, as some cynics think, a *reductio ad absurdum* of the larger principle of Asia for the Asiatics. Historically, geographically, culturally, linguistically, Cambodia has a case for independence, if such a case were any more in need of advocacy. But it is true that the alternatives with which this new state is faced are precariously balanced.

Her neighbours, even with the best intentions, cannot resist the overflow of their rapidly expanding populations into the rich, sparsely-peopled areas of Cambodia. It was in this way that the Annamese appropriated Cochin China. With the march of events Cambodia might have to surrender her share in the control of the port of Saigon and in the navigation of the Lower Mekong. The economy of the country is already the monopoly of foreigners, for the Chinese and Vietnamese, along with a handful of Cham

Muslims and French, control the fish, rice and timber trade of the country.

Perhaps the Vietnamese and Siamese, who were virtually in possession of Cambodia before the French appeared, will take up their old positions again. Always provided, of course, that their ambitions are not thwarted by the Chinese, who loom like a storm-cloud over the whole Indo-Chinese peninsula and the South-East Asian horizon.

LIST OF THE KHMER RULERS

showing the chief monuments built by them

The Funan Period

The First Kaundinya (Huen) Dynasty. (A.D)

Liu-ye (? 180-190), Queen.

Huen-tien (Indian name Kaundinya (190-198). Came from India, defeated Liu-ye, married her and they ruled together.

P'an Dynasty.

P'an-h'uang (198-217).

P'an-p'an (217-220), son of preceding.

Fan Dynasty: Fan is probably part of a Chinese transliteration of the Indian suffix "varman".

Fan Shih-man (220-228), general of P'an-p'an; chosen king by people after that king's death.

Fan Ching-sheng (228-230), son of preceding.

Fan Chan (230-240), cousin of preceding, whom he murdered.

Fan Ch'ang (240), cousin of preceding, whom he murdered.

Fan Hsun (240-288), murdered his predecessor. He was a general of Fan Chan.

Unknown (288-310).

Unknown (310-357).

Chu Chan-t'an (357), usurper; his Indian name was probably Chandana.

The Second Kaundinya (Pa-mo) Dynasty.

Chiao Chen-ju (Kaundinya II) (420). Usurper from P'an-p'an in Malaya.

Che-li-t'o-pa-mo (Indian name? Srindravarman) (430-440).

Unknown (440-470).

She-yeh Pa-mo (470-514), Indian name Jayavarman. Capitals at Na-fu-na and Vyadhapura, now Angkor Borei.

Liu-t'e Pa-mo (514-545), Indian name Rudravarman. He was a Buddhist. On his death (545) political troubles broke out and many feudatory states became independent, among them Chenla.

The Chenla Period

Srutavarman (cir 500), usurper; the first semi-historic king of the Kambujas.

Sreshthavarman (545-560), son of preceding. Capital at Sreshthapura, now Badom.

Rudravarman (560-575).

Kambujarajalakshmi (575-580), female maternal cousin of Sreshthavarman.

Bhavavarman I (580-598), usurper, married preceding. Bhavavarman was descended from a collateral line of the royal house.

Mahendravarman (or Sitrasena) (598-610), brother of preceding. Capital at Bhavapura (Prei Nokor).

A great general. Capital at Sambhupura (Sambor on the Mekong).

Isanavarman I (610-635), son of preceding. Subdued the last territories of Funan. In 627 Funan disappeared as a vassal state. Capital at Isanapura (Sambor of St'ung Sen). *Monument :* Sambor Prei Kuk (630).

Bhavavarman II (635-640), capital at Sambhupura.

Jayavarman I (640-680).

Jayadevi (680-685), widow of above.

Lower Chenla.

Pushkaraksha (716-730), married the reigning queen of Sambhupura. Capitals at Sambhupura and Aninditapura (near Ankor?).

Sambhuvarman (750).

Rajendravarman I (760).

Mahipativarman (780) son of above. He was beheaded by the king of Zabaj (Java).

Jayavarman I-bis (780-?802).

The Angkor Period

Jayavarman II (802-854), usurper. Capitals at Indrapura (Thbong Khmum), Hariharalaya (Lolei, near Roluos), Amarendrapura (Ak Yom), Mahendraparvata. *Monuments :* Ak Yom. (810). Temples on Phnom Kulen (cir 850).

Jayavarman III (854-877), son of above; a Vishnuite. Capital at Hariharalaya.

Indravarman I (877-889), maternal cousin of preceding. Capital at Hariharalaya. *Monuments :* Prah Ko (879). Bakong (881).

Yasovarman I (889-910), son of preceding. Capital at Yasodharapura (The First Angkor). *Monuments :* Lolei (893). Prah Vihear (893). Phnom Bakheng (900). Phnom Krom (cir 910). Phnom Bok (cir 910).

Harshavarman I (910-925), son of preceding. Capital at Yasodharapura. *Monument :* Prasat Kravan (921).

Isanavarman II (925-928), brother of preceding.

Jayavarman IV (928-941), brother-in-law of Yasovarman I. Capital at Chok Gargyar (Koh Ker). *Monuments :* Koh Ker Group (931-950). The Rahal (or Reservoir). Prasat Thom. Prasat Banteay Pir Chan (937).

Rajendravarman II (944-968), half-brother of preceding. Capital at Yasodharpura. *Monuments :* Baksei Chamkrong (947). Eastern

Mebon (952). Leak Neang (960). Pre Rup (961). Banteay Srei (967) started. Phimeanakas (968) started.

Jayavarman V (968-1001) son of above. *Monuments:* Banteay Srei (975) completed. Ta Keo (1000) started. Phimeanakas (continued).

Udayadityavarman I (1001-1002) maternal uncle of preceding.

Jayaviravarman (1002) brother of above.

Suryavarman I (1002-1049) usurper from Ligor. Buddhist. Capital at Prah Khan of Kompong Svai. Later shifted to Angkor, built around central temple of Phimeanakas; The Second Angkor. *Monuments:* Ta Keo (completed) 1005. Phimeanakas (completed) 1005. North and South Kleangs. Phnom Chisor. Prah Vihear. Vat Phu (in part). Western Baray.

Udayadityavarman II (1049-1066) great-nephew of preceding. Capital at the Second Angkor. *Monument:* Baphuon (1060).

Harshavarman III (1066-1085), brother of preceding. *Monuments:* Western Mebon. Phimai (in part).

Jayavarman VI (1085-1107) usurper. Capital at Second Angkor. *Monuments:* Beng Mealea. Prah Palilay.

Dharanindravarman I (1107-1112), brother of preceding. Capital at Second Angkor. *Monuments:* Prah Pithu. Chau Say Tevoda. Thommanon.

Suryavarman II (1112-1150) nephew of preceding. *Monuments:* Banteay Samre (embellished). Prah Khan of Kompong Svai (embellished). Angkor Vat (started).

Harshavarman IV (1150-51), cousin of above.

Dharanindravarman II (1151-1160), Cousin of preceding; a Buddhist.

Yasovarman II (1160-1165), nephew of preceding.

Tribhuvanadityavarman (1165-1177), usurper.

Jayavarman VII (1181-1215) son of Dharanindravarman II. Fervent Buddhist. Capital the Third Angkor. Angkor Thom, built around the Bayon. *Monuments:* Banteay Chhmar. Banteay Kdei. Banteay Prei. Bayon. Krol Ko. Neak Pean. Palace (Terraces). Prah Khan of Angkor (1191). Prasat Prei. Srah Srang (Terrace). Suor Prat. Ta Nei. Ta Prohm (1186). Ta Prohm Kel. Ta Som.

Indravarman II (1215-1243), son of preceding.

Jayavarman VIII (1243-1295). *Monument:* Mangalartha (known as Temple 487) (1295).

Srindravarman (1295-1308), son-in-law of preceding. Visit of Chou Ta-kuan (1295-1297).

Srindrajayavarman (1308-1327).

Jayavarman IX or Jayavarman Paramesvara (1327-1330).

Paramathakemaraja (1330-1353).

Hou Eul-Na (?-1391).

Samtac Prah Phaya (?-1404).

Nippean-bat (1405-1409).

Lampong Paramaraja (1409-1416).

Sorijong (1416-1425).
Barom Racha (1425-29).
Dharmasoka (1429-31).
Ponha Yat (1432).
Fall of Angkor (1432).
Ang Chang I (1516-1566).
Chi Chetta I (cir 1580).
Prea Rama Chong (cir. 1594) nephew of preceding.
Baromo Racha (cir. 1596), son of Chi Chetta I.
Chi Chetta II (1618-1626).
Rama Thipdi Chan (1642-1657).
Ang Tong (1755-1775).
Ontei (1758-1775).
Ang Eng (1779-1794).
Ang-Chang (1794-1834).
Ang Wei (1835-1845) daughter of preceding.
Ang Duong (1845-1859) uncle of preceding.
Norodom (1859-1904) son of preceding.
Sisowath (1904-1927) brother of preceding.
Sisowath Monivong (1927-1941) son of preceding.
Norodom Sihanouk (1941-) son of preceding.

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